





THE FORGERIES  
OF  
BURNS  
AND OTHER  
MANUSCRIPTS.











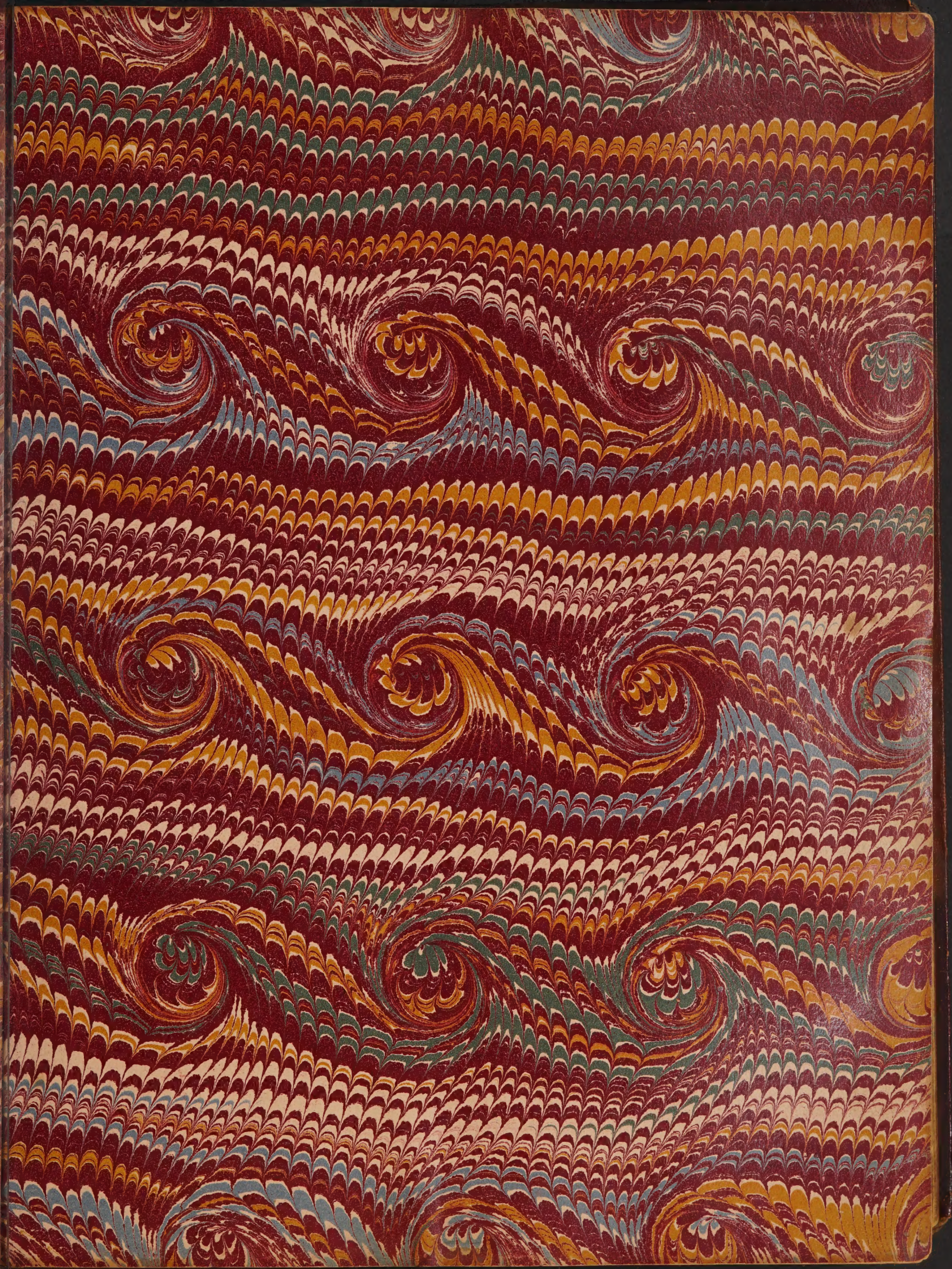






H. D. Colvill-Scott.





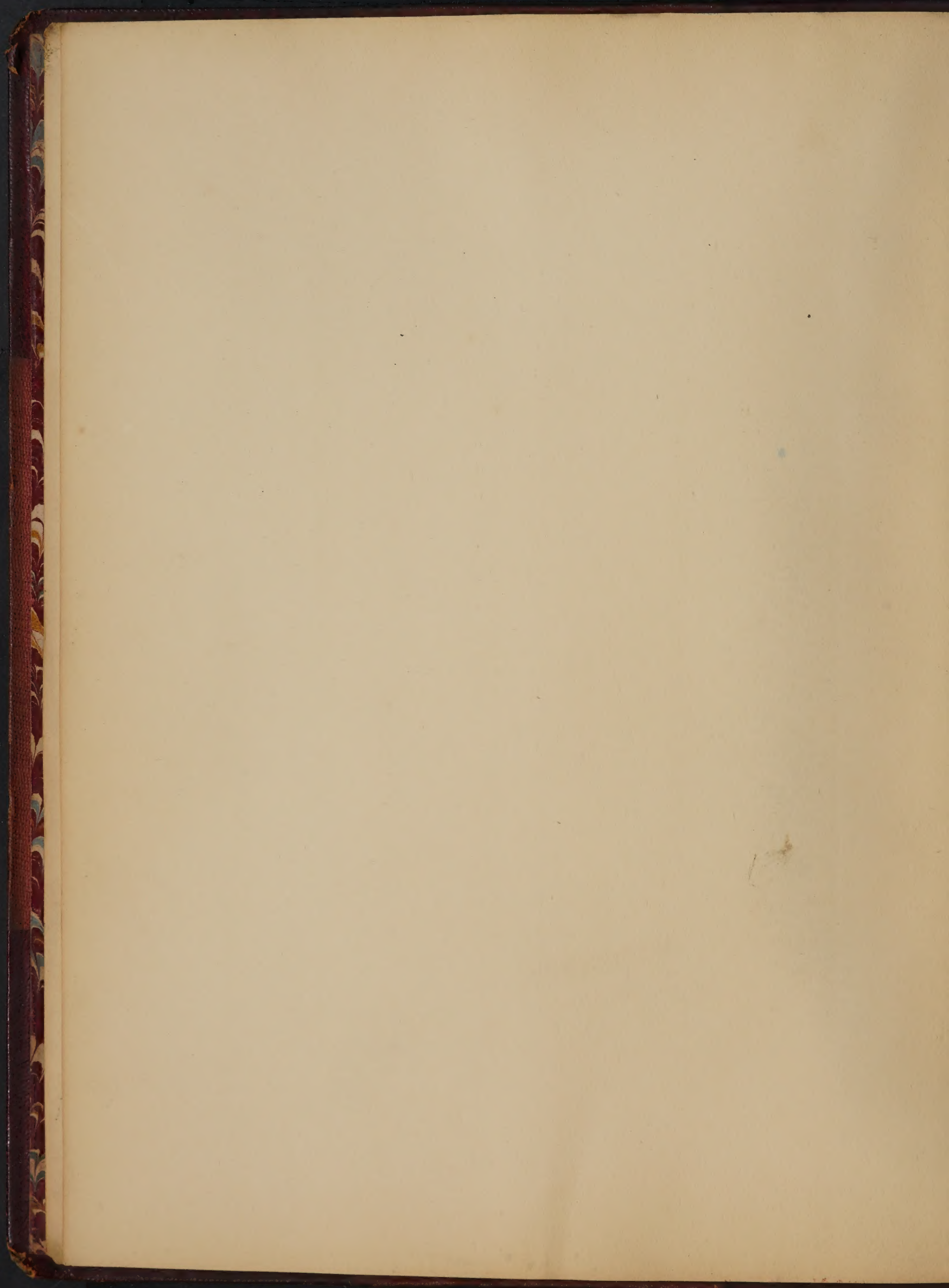








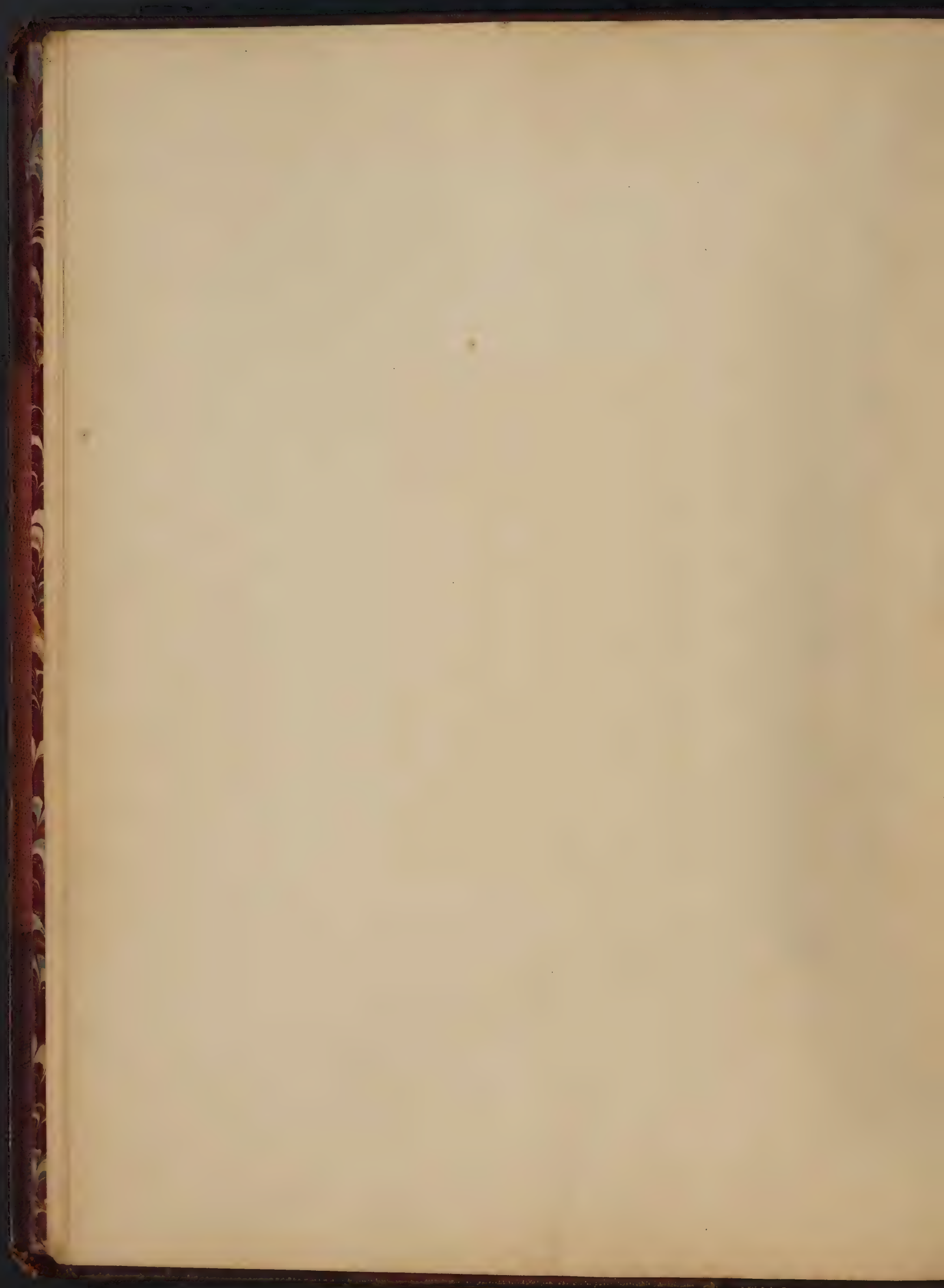














CORRESPONDENCE.

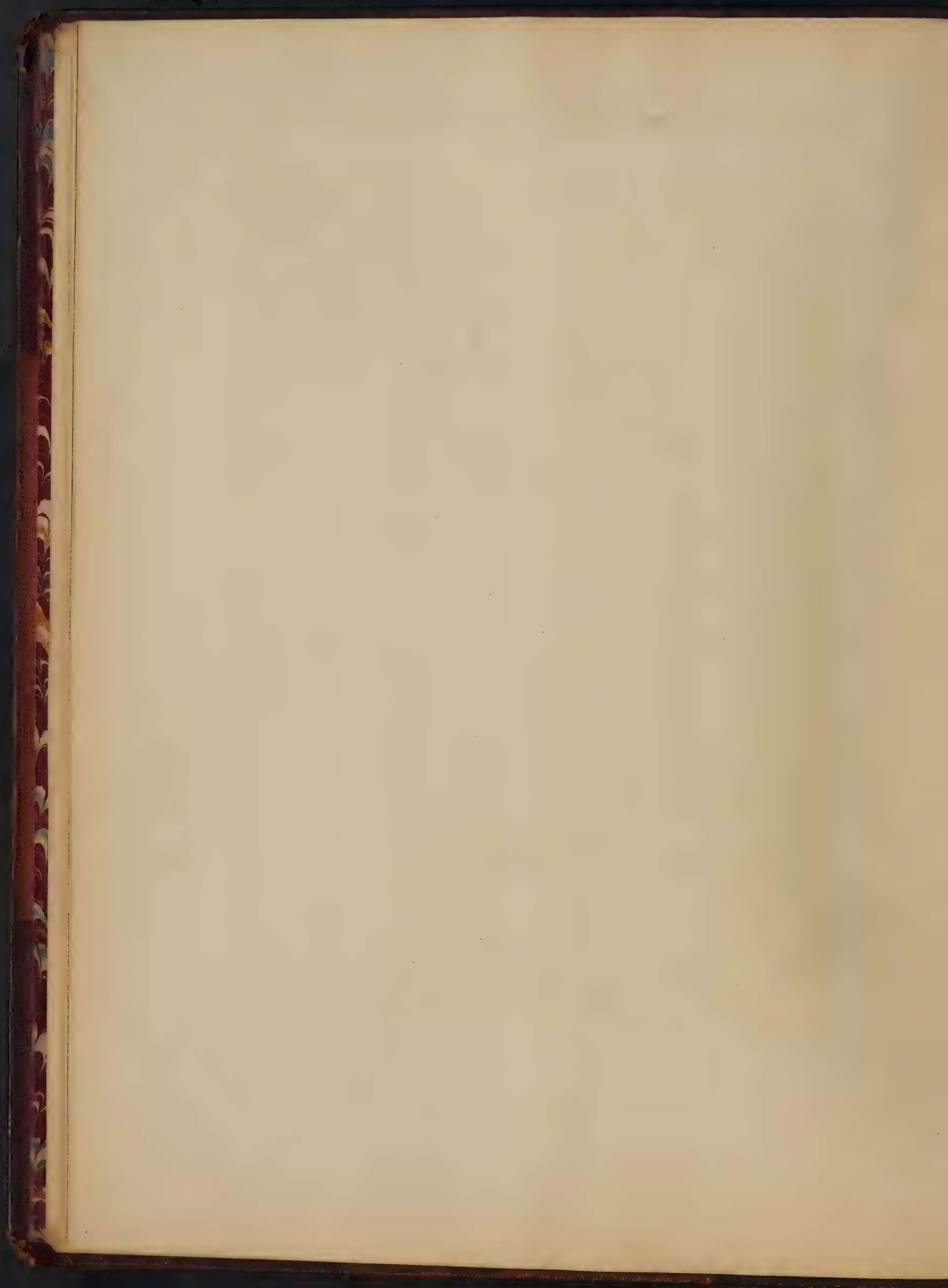
UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF ROBT. BURNS.

SIR,—As an MSS. collector, I would beg of you to give me a little space in your valuable journal to say a few words anent your correspondent's long and interesting letter on the above. I sincerely hope that Mr James Mackenzie will submit his Burns letter to the British Museum authorities for inspection, for, as your correspondent admits, there are none better able or more competent to judge whether this said letter is authentic or not. If Mr Mackenzie has no doubt as to its genuineness, he surely will have no objection to accepting the offer of your correspondent, and enable the Kilmarnock Burns Federation to make an addition to its funds. The warning conveyed in your correspondent's letter is well timed, for the number of Burns and Scott forgeries in Scotland is at present considerable, and it appears to me iniquitous that the should frequently be sold to young collectors, and the intelligent public be offered such worthless trash. I have seen many myself, and have heard curious stories of their manufacturers. It is to be hoped that the Archivist Society will take the matter up, and attempt to put an end to the continued sale of these forged documents. In that monumental and excellent work, 'A Guide to the Collector of Historical Documents, Literary MSS., and Autograph Letters,' by the Rev. Dr Scott and Mr Samuel Davey, F.R.S.L., published last year, I find the following, which may be of interest to those who have followed this correspondence:—"The greatest caution must be observed in purchasing, especially at the present time, when forged specimens are being manufactured with unprecedented daring, through the encouragement given by the simple and unwary, who are deluded into purchasing by advertisements and other unorthodox channels, instead of choosing the safe and regular plan of buying from well known and respectable dealers" (p. 35). I hope, sir, you will pardon my having taken up so much of your valuable space in making a few comments on a subject which I hope is not ended here.—I am, &c.,

H. D. COLVIN SCOTT,

Brookwood, Surrey.







# UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF ROBERT BURNS.

(By a Correspondent).

THAN the reply of Mr Mackenzie nothing could be more unsatisfactory. He writes as if it were your correspondent and not his Burns letter that is on trial. My identity has nothing to do with the falsity or otherwise of his pretended letter. Anonymity is one of the characteristics of a free press; and Mr Mackenzie—wise man that he is—not satisfied with his own judgment as to the genuineness of the letter, has had it “attested fully by those who are competent to judge, including a respected descendant of the author.” Mr Mackenzie ought to name his witnesses, and I ask him to do so. To “attest” a document of national importance—which this pretended letter undoubtedly is—is a public act, and Mr Mackenzie is in duty bound to give the names of the attestors and the nature of their attestations the same publicity as he gave the letter itself. On reflection he will see that this is but fair—the letter and the attestations being as much one as the Siamese twins—and when he has the pen in hand he might give the readers of the *Cumnock Express* (which circulates not only in the very heart of the Land of Burns, but which follows the wandering Scot, who, wherever he may settle himself, next to a church and a school, and sometimes prior to the setting up of either, founds a Burns Club) a history of the letter.

Mr Mackenzie could have chosen no better medium than the *Cumnock Express* to ascertain the *bona fides* of “Mr John Hill, weaver, Cumnock”; and ninety and nine out of every hundred of its readers has had his or her appetite whetted as to the fortunes of this letter, which (if it be genuine) has for a hundred years been hidden from the public eye. At this moment a three-volume edition of the works of Burns is in the press; and who can doubt that the editor, were the letter authenticated by the British Museum, would be glad to insert it in his book, and by inserting it would he not for ever link the name of Mr Mackenzie, the rescuer of the letter, with that of the Poet? Was ever immortality—the first and last ambition of noble souls—got on easier terms.

I say again that Mr Mackenzie’s letter is an impossible letter, and that I believe it is impossible for him by the testimony of such an unimpeachable authority as I have named to father it upon Burns. This is not a mere dealer’s affair; it is an affair of national importance, and Mr Mackenzie himself has made it public. Next to the importance of the letter itself is that of the testimony in favour of its genuineness, which I am surprised Mr Mackenzie should have suppressed. I have not questioned Mr Mackenzie’s good faith in the matter, but I regret his having declined to test the authenticity of the letter in a way which would be creditable to himself and satisfactory to every lover of the poet. Mr Mackenzie may not be aware that the market not only at home, but in America, is flooded with spurious MS., and the public, not having been on their guard, have been greatly deceived by them. An experienced eye can no doubt tell a Burns MS. from a Wilson-Dobie one as readily as it can tell a real from a false coin. In such matters, experience on the part of amateurs is generally dearly bought. As an old hand, I should advise beginners not to purchase Burns or Scott MSS. (nor indeed MSS. of any importance, except from those who are willing to submit such for authentication to the British Museum). It cannot be too widely known that the British Museum, which, in the widest sense of the term is a National Institution, quietly serves the public, without fee or reward, in this and endless other directions. Its staff, in every one of its departments, from Dr Garnett downwards, never fails to respond to any reasonable application for help; and in Mr John P. Anderson, himself a Scotchman

and the author of a Bibliography of Burns, Mr Mackenzie will find an authority that will be accepted as final.

Mr Mackenzie repudiates the idea of his being a “dealer.” No doubt dealers have interests, but there are dealers and dealers, and every honest dealer must be anxious once and for all to have the market cleared of the foul span of the forger. Asbestos does not dread the fire, and no dealer who has a true Burns MS. will for a moment shirk submitting it to the assay-master I have named. Being outside trade, as Mr Mackenzie himself is, the British Museum should be above suspicion. Not a “dealer,” and not an expert, Mr Mackenzie must form one of the class Burns had in his eye when he wrote—

“Nae diffierence, but bulkiest or tallest,

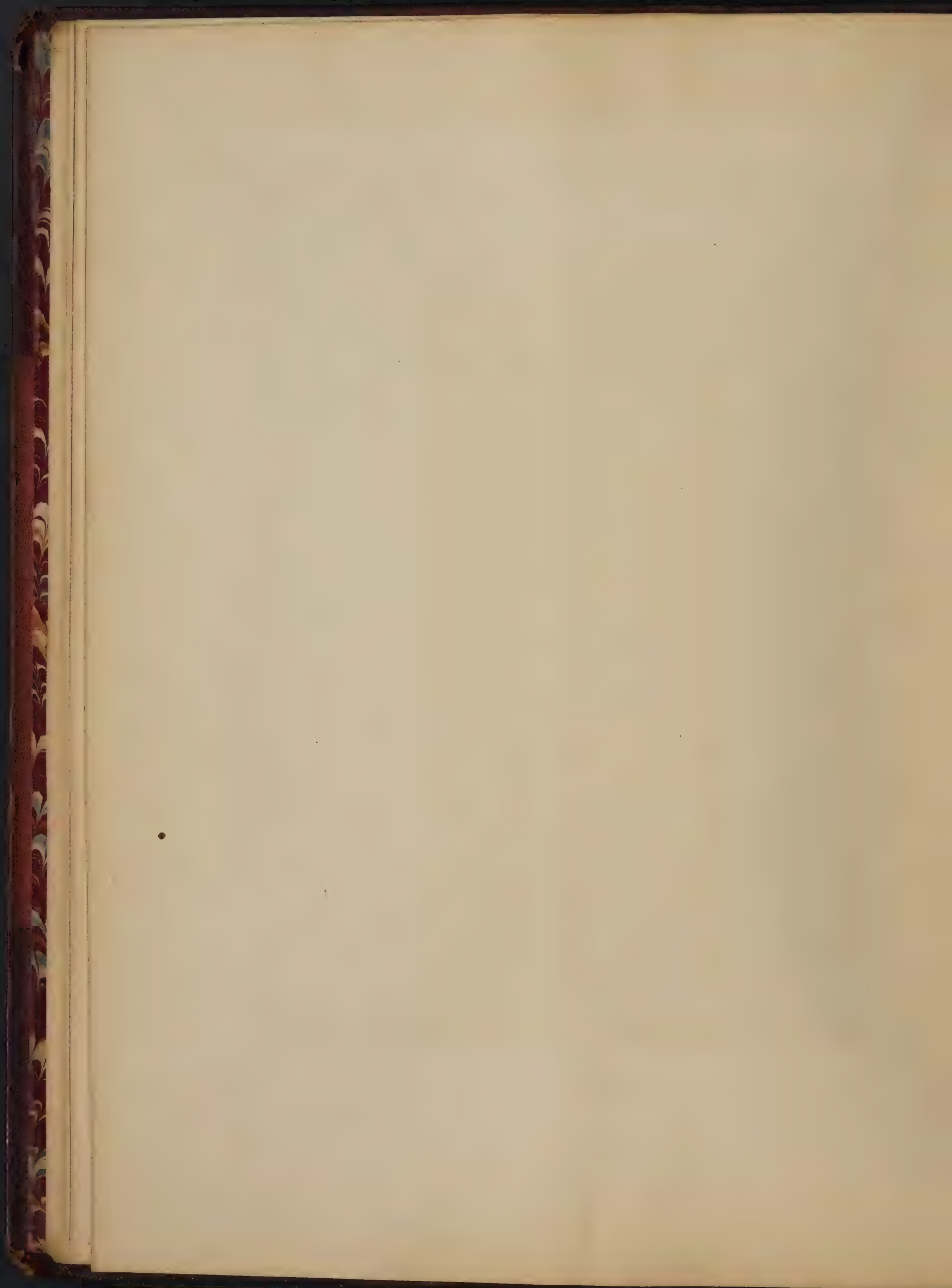
With comfortable dullness in for ballast.”

But to return. With the history of the John Hill letter Mr Mackenzie might give us the history of the Rillbank Crescent letters, which I have referred to in my former communication, and which are said to have been in his possession for about a quarter of a century. If it took Mr Mackenzie five-and-twenty years to discover the true character of these documents, which I hope to show are one and all false, I wonder at his confidence in his judgment of the John Hill letter. On referring to the file of the *Scotsman* newspaper, regarding the sale of the Rillbank Crescent MS., under date May 26th, 1891, I find the following:—

“Before beginning the sale,” . . . Mr Munro stated that he had heard doubts thrown upon these manuscripts. For his own part he had examined them pretty carefully, and he did not for one participate in these doubts. He believed the documents were thoroughly genuine. One man, it was said, had written them; if that man was produced he (Mr Munro) would say he was a genius. While some people said they were forgeries, and he said they were not, yet his word must not be taken for it; purchasers must judge for themselves. There must be no question about them afterwards. The sale was then proceeded with. Five autograph letters by Burns, one of them with a poem entitled “Dysarts’ Carles,” respectively realised prices varying between one and two guineas. In connection with what in the catalogue was described as a song by Dr Blacklock, “For Lack of Gold,” in the handwriting of Robert Burns, signed by James Hogg, the Auctioneer stated that it had been submitted to, among others, Sir William Fettes Douglas, and he said he thought that was a mistake on the part of Burns or somebody else, as Blacklock was not the author of the song. The song was sold for 30s. A discharge for £3, granted and signed by Burns, was sold for 32s; a manuscript signed by him realised £3 7s 6d; a poem written and signed by him changed hands at £2 2s; and a poem to Clarinda was sold for £3.” If Mr MacKenzie was mistaken as to the character of these documents—the nature of which is more eloquently conveyed by these figures than by any words at my command—why, I ask, should he be so confident as he professes to be in his opinion of John Hill’s letter? Anyhow, any light that he may be able to throw upon any or all of these documents cannot but enlarge our knowledge and bring us nearer to a right discernment of the true and the false in MSS. of National Poet.

In view of such facts as these, need we wonder that a body of collectors are clubbing together, for mutual help and protection against the wiles of the forger, and forming a society, to be called the Society of Archivists. Its headquarters is to be in London, and Mr H. Saxe Wyndham is acting as interim secretary. In conclusion, I repeat my offer to pay a guinea to the Kilmarnock Federation of Burns Clubs if the British Museum pronounces the John Hill letter to be other than an imposition.







## CORRESPONDENCE

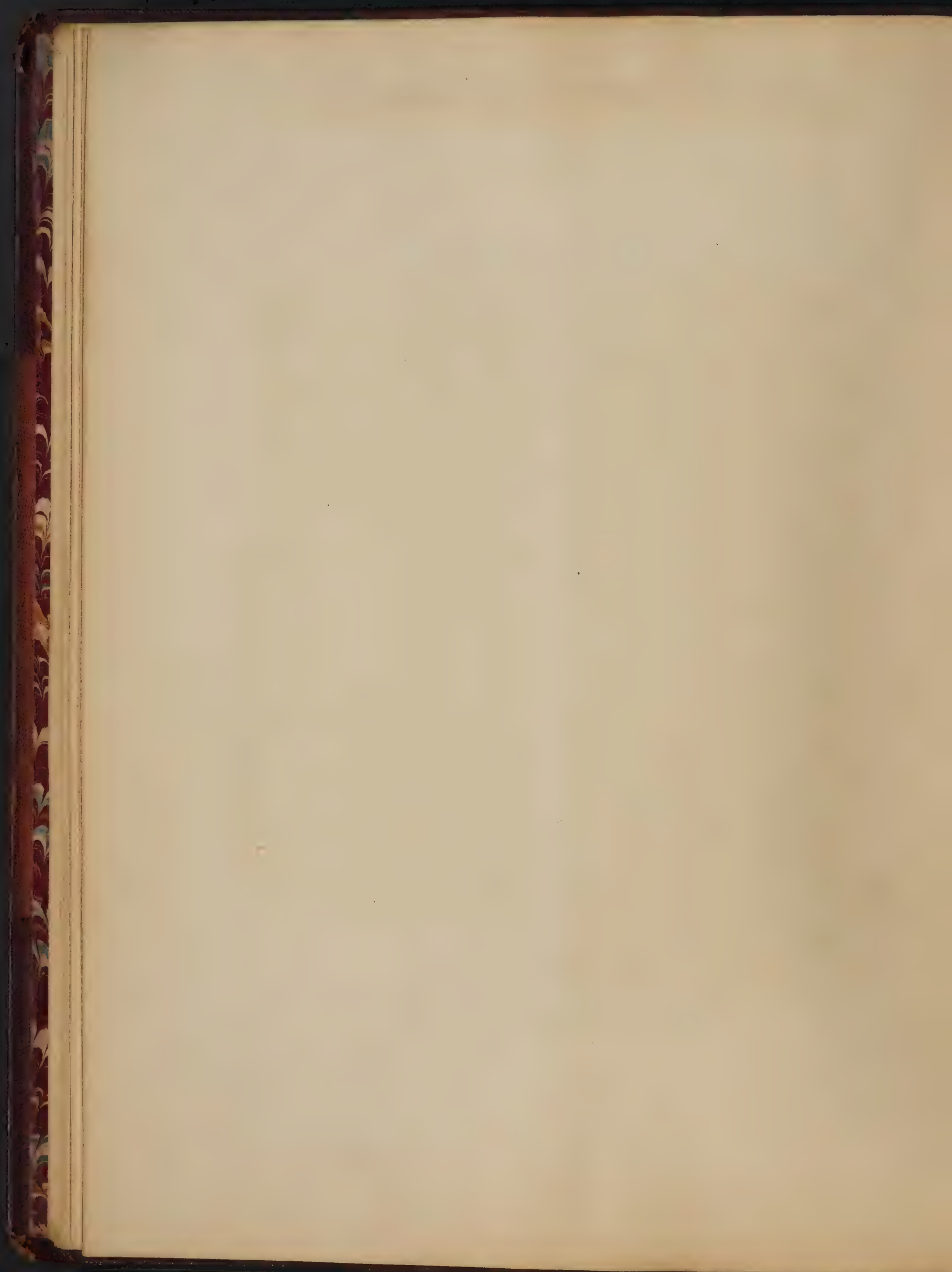
## BURNS MSS. LETTER.

SIR.—I have only just seen Mr Mackenzie's last letter anent the above. He says the letter written by me 'calls for some remarks,' but I am unable to notice anything in his letter which specially refers to anything in mine. I should like, if space permits, to make a few comments on his last epistle. Premising that it seems curious to me that Mr Mackenzie should still feel disinclined to accept the generous offer of your correspondent, and dispatch the letter which has evoked this correspondence to London to be placed before *the most experienced literary critics of this kingdom*. I am quite sure that all intelligent collectors would not use the ridiculous arguments of anonymity which Mr Mackenzie does with such gusto. He seems to forget that it was he that first gave publicity to the matter. I understand Mr Mackenzie to insinuate that dealers are attempting to prove that many genuine MSS., lately come to light, are not genuine MSS. of the poet. This is nonsense, and there is no reason for the assertion. All respectable dealers are most certainly wishful that the market should be cleared of worthless paper, and only original matter dealt in. In other words, they do not want the public to be taken in with forgeries, no matter how clever they be. There is no doubt that since the last batch of forgeries were given to the world, the honest dealers have been looking to their laurels, and have at last really begun to make strenuous efforts to stop the sale of worthless rubbish. Young collectors pay dearly for being landed with it, and I myself, on returning such trash, have even been threatened with prosecution. I am no dealer, but a collector pure and simple, and as such have had constant opportunities of seeing all kinds of forgeries, and it seems to me curious that Mr Mackenzie has never come across such. He might have seen some and thought they were real genuine autographs of Burns. Some I have seen were well done, and to some people it is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between the true and the false. I should like to know who is 'the most experienced critic known to exist.' It is a pity that Mr Mackenzie does not name 'the most experienced critic known to exist.' I wonder if he hails from London or its suburbs, or Edinburgh? As for candlesticks and other things it may be quite possible, and even probable, they are genuine articles, but we are not discussing them here; and I for one will not be drawn off the scent by his red herring. Mr Mackenzie describes the anonymous correspondent as some 'unknown jobber.' I am inclined to differ with him here. I have reason to believe he is neither a 'jobber' nor 'unknown.' Just to refer to the verses which Mr Mackenzie gives—entitled 'To the Rosebud'—I would ask Mr M. one question, as a Burns scholar, is he certain verses 4, 5, and 6 are by Burns? and, if so, how can he prove they are original? I am inclined to doubt them, but until Mr Mackenzie is good enough to accept your anonymous correspondents generous offer, we can let that matter rest. If Mr Mackenzie takes so much objection to anonymity as an argument against sending his letter to London, I will make him the same offer myself, and I shall even extend it to 'The Rosebud.'—I am, Sir, etc.,

H. D. COLVIN SCOTT.

\* \* BURNS' MSS. LETTER will be found in our inside columns.







CORRESPONDENCE.

BURNS MSS. LETTER, &c.

SIR,—The time has come when all senseless objections to what is good and true in relation to Burns must be left to be answered by the Poet himself. Any man who really knows the writings of Burns should read the following lines, and having done so, consider for a moment if he cannot discover in them the sentiments of our National Bard. Some slight differences may exist in the actual writings, due no doubt to a hard quill pen, and one that has often been written with, or even to the mood in which the Poet was at the time, according to the subject in hand. I observe, when he is engaged on the sublime and heroic, he is often uneven in his lines; but to one versed in his style, however, the same cast of hand is in all. Strange, in a book which I have, written by his old teacher, Mr Murdoch, one may easily trace the style of writing of the one in the other. Therefore it is I consider a waste of time to do more than submit the following verses, copied from the unpublished MS. in my possession, to speak for themselves. The first is addressed to Gilbert by his brother, Robert Burns, and his Christian name is spelt in full in this instance—a thing seldom done by him:—

THE POOR MAN'S PRAYER.

Amidst the more important toils of state,  
The counsels labouring in thy patriot soil;  
Though Europe from thy voice expect her fate,  
And thy keen glance extend from pole to pole.  
O Chatham, nursed in ancient virtues lore,  
To these sad strains incline a favouring ear,  
Think on the God whom thou and I adore,  
Nor turn unpitying from the poor man's prayer.  
Ah me! how blest was once a peasant's life,  
No lawless passion swelled my even breast;  
Far from the roaring waves of civil strife,  
Sound were my slumbers, and my heart at rest.  
I ne'er for guilty painful passions roved,  
But taught by Nature and by choice to wed  
From all the hamlet, culled whom best I loved  
With her I shared my heart, with her my bed.  
To gild her worth I asked no wealthy dower,  
My toil could feed her, and my arm defend;  
I envied no man's riches, no man's power,  
I asked of none to give, of none to lend.  
And she, the faithful partner of my care,  
When ruddy evening streaked the western sky,  
Looked towards the uplands if her mate was there,  
Or through the beeches cast an anxious eye—  
While I, contented with my homely cheer,  
Saw round my knees our prattling children play,  
And oft with pleased attention sat to hear,  
The little history of their idle day.

After depicting famine caused in a land of plenty by the corn being taken to other lands, and praying Chatham to prevent this—

"If still the griping cormorants withhold  
The fruits which rain and genial seasons send,"

he concludes in the twenty-third verse with—

Then joy to thee, and to thy children peace,  
The grateful hind shall drink from plenty's horn;  
And while they share the cultured land's increase,  
The poor shall bless the day when Pitt was born.

I think the sentiment expressed in this poem is an improvement on the other. ROBT. BURNS.

Or take a single verse of another poem addressed to Mr John Lapraik—

Eternal mind, who ruled the fates  
Of dying realms and rising states  
With one unchanged decree;  
While we admire thy vast affairs,  
Say, can our little trifling cares  
Afford a smile to thee?

Or other two verses from a poem written after hearing a sermon preached in Tarbolton Church—

The sophist spins his subtle thread  
On liberty and fate,  
With heart depraved and puzzled head  
Prolongs the dull debate;  
Till Virtue, Truth, his Saviour and his God,  
By Metaphysics mighty lore,  
At once lose all their essence, all their power,  
Charmed to eternal sleep by that Magician's rod.

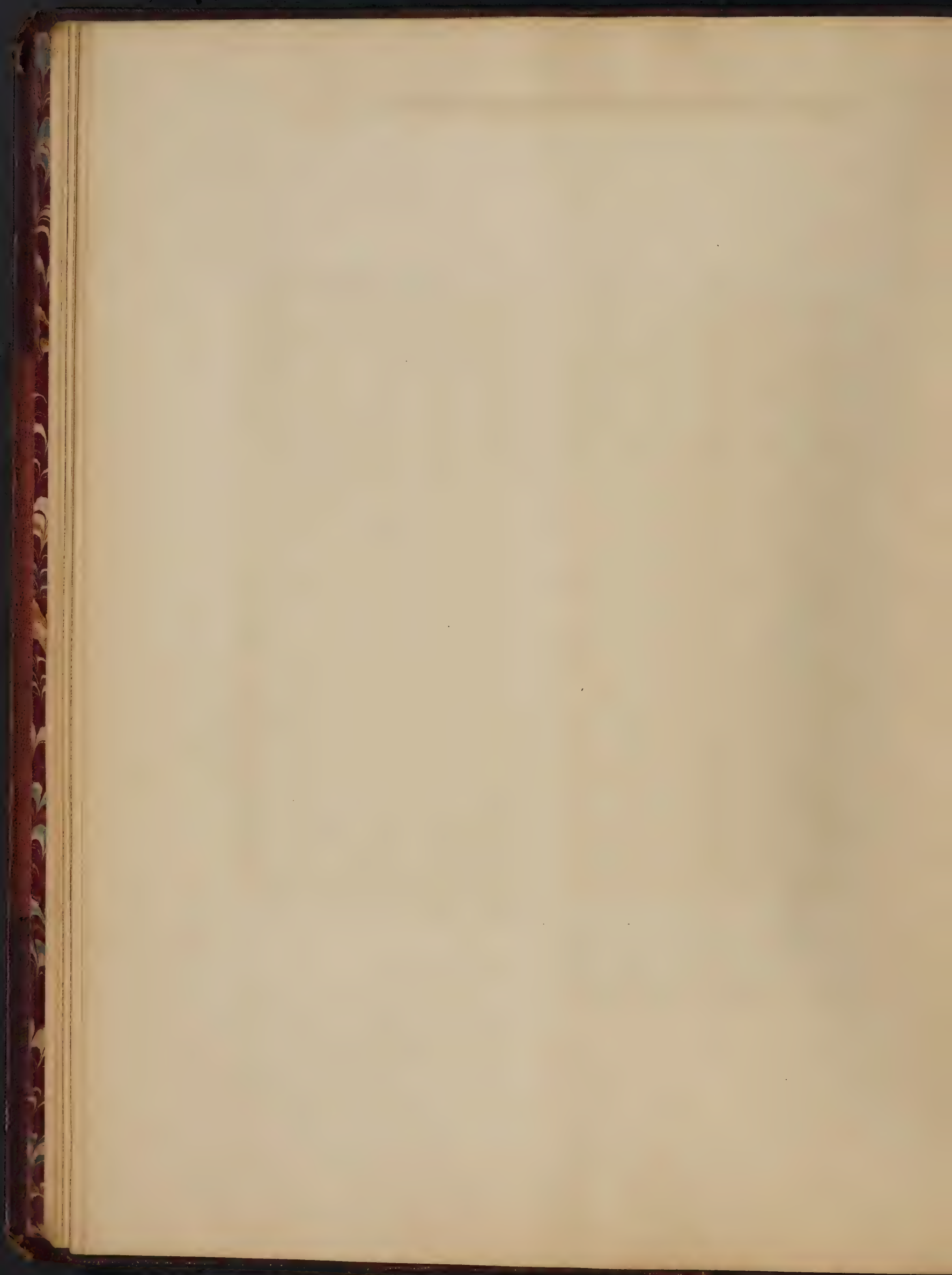
And concludes in the 7th verse—

Proceed, my friend, so shalt thou find  
In these dark paths thy God;  
His works, His word, with steady mind,  
From stern oppression's rod,  
From quibbling words, from lying lips retrieve;  
And whilst thou talk'st of ancient days,  
Erect memorials to Jehovah's praise,  
Till sceptics cease to doubt and infidels believe.

The original MSS., as I stated formerly, can all be seen at my address. And now I leave this with your readers, convinced that after reading these lines it will be difficult to convince them that such are other than the genuine productions of our national poet, and that no amount of anonymous fiction will do more than show that they can stand the test, and, in this case, may have been the means of increasing their knowledge of the poet's works, and that much is still to be told.—I remain, &c.,

JAMES MACKENZIE, F.S.A., Scot.







AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER BY  
ROBERT BURNS.

(By a Correspondent.)

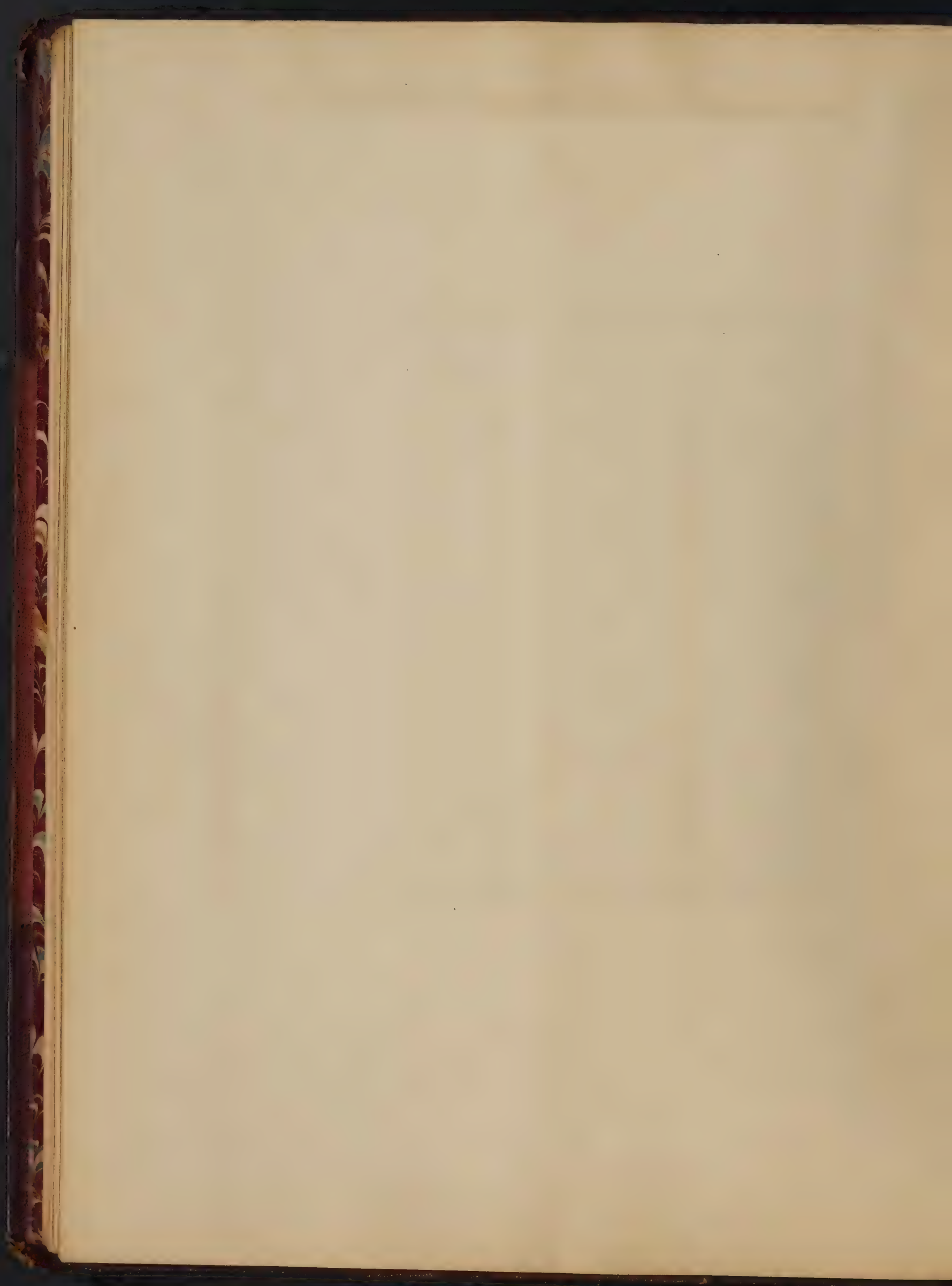
MR MACKENZIE is not improving his position. Nasty phrases, such as emblemish his letters, are not characteristic of a good cause; and I hope they are unworthy of his happier moments. I have not the honour of his acquaintance; and I never heard of his name in relation to Burns till the Rillbank Crescent MSS. came to be sold. For his own reputation, no less than for the protection of inexperienced collectors, I hope he will not allow the opportunity to pass without giving your readers, as the *Almanac* have it, "a full and particular account" of how and when the Rillbank Crescent MSS. came into his possession, and why he allowed them to pass out of his hands for what was virtually an old song. Interesting, too, would be the history of the MSS. of the John Hill letter, and that of "The Rosebud" song, which he sets down to the credit of Burns. If Mr Mackenzie would leave the flabby regions of sentiment and condescend to the solid region of bald facts he would cut a better figure than he is doing. His brass candlestick is wide of the mark. But does it not occur to him that if it was necessary to establish the historic character he claims for this candlestick—the authenticity of which no one seems to have called in question—that he should tell us all he knows about it, that it is, to say the least, quite as necessary for him to tell us all he knows as to the holders of these MSS. and how he came to be possessed of them.

Mr Mackenzie says he has never seen a MSS. attributed to Burns that was not genuine; but that a "cry" which has "been fairly successful" has been raised against a batch that "for some time past have come to light through other than the usual dealers." Are these, I ask, the Wilson-Dobble lot? Who are the "usual dealers" in MSS? The majority of such pop through auction rooms, and if some are accepted as genuine and others not, as happened (not in London but in *Auld Reekie*) at the sale already referred to, I do not see that there is any ground for prejudice in the matter; nor, so far as I know, has any attempt been made to "descrie the value of genuine MSS." But suppose such an attempt has been made. What then? Refer the disputed MSS., say I, to the British Museum. The

matter is simple enough. Take a case of which I have just heard, that of a forty pound (£40) lot—not by any means important, but it will serve as an illustration—that were purchased in Edinburgh by a bookseller who unsuspectingly sold them in good faith to an equally unsuspecting client. By-and-bye the MSS. came under an experienced eye, who at once saw they were not in the grand Roman hand of Burns. They were returned to the bookseller, who, desirous of protecting his client's interest, had the documents tested. Having had them compared with those (in the first instance) in the portfolio of a friend, and which, in the long ago, had been purchased in Edinburgh sale rooms. Between those recently "come to light," that is between now and 1887—for previous to the close of that year no suspicion existed as to the MSS. of Burns—and those of earlier purchases there was a marked difference; and the more the documents were examined the more apparent the difference became. But to make sure, all the documents were sent to an expert for his opinion, and no explanation was given as to how or where they were purchased. When the documents were returned, all the old ones were described as "true," and all the new ones as "false." Such is an example, and I wish it was the only one of what collectors have to complain of.

Mr Mackenzie, in accusing me of "first hanging and then trying" his John Hill letter, is hardly just to himself. He must be blind indeed if he does not see the difference between the composition of a document and the hand in which it is written. I said not a word as to the penmanship of the John Hill letter, nor do I say that "The Rosebud" song is not in the handwriting of the poet, but I do not for a moment believe that either the letter or the song are the composition of Burns. It is possible that the song may be in the handwriting of the poet, but that of itself does not prove that it is the outcome of his own brain. Like the letter, the song looks the stamp of the master; and Mr Mackenzie is but beating the air when he speaks of calling "Burns himself to witness," and of having received the opinion of the "most experienced critic known to exist." Till Mr Mackenzie has verified these documents by submitting them to the British Museum, and told us frankly and fully all that he knows about them, we shall regard him as the dupe of the forgers, who, clever though they undoubtedly are, have at last been found out.

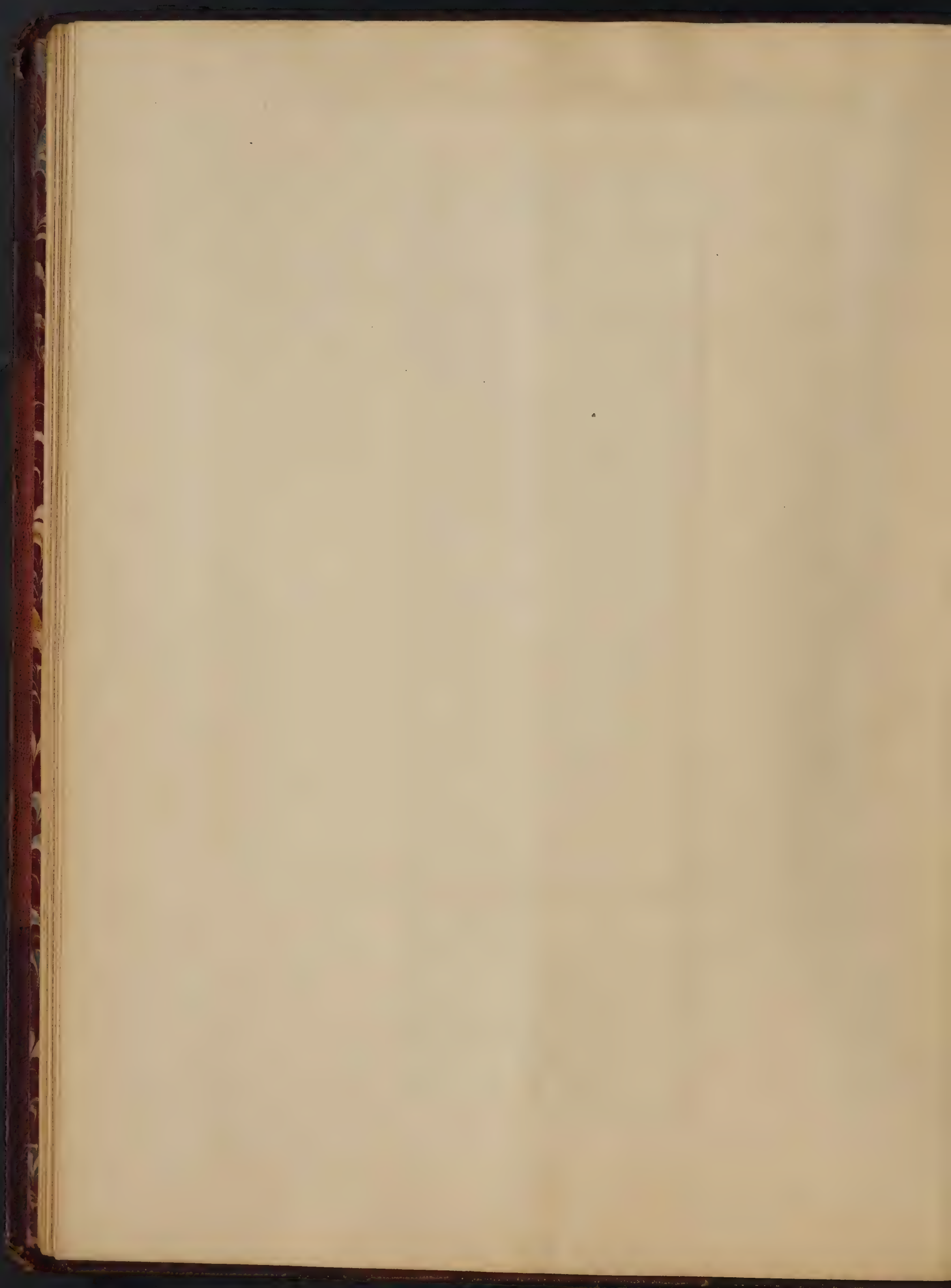






TO-DAY we direct attention to a question of national, even international, importance, one which has long excited much interest and anxiety in a certain section of the literary world—namely, the authenticity of a mass of old manuscripts—chiefly purporting to be relics of Burns, Scott, and the Jacobite times—which has within the last few years been placed upon the market with amazing prodigality. This question is not now raised for the first time, for the genuineness or otherwise of these manuscripts has long been a subject of fierce contention among collectors; but the time seems to have now come, and the opportunity to have arisen, for tracing these documents to their original source, and, if possible, determining the truth or falsity of the position taken up by the two sides into which collectors have ranged themselves. In order to make our position clear, we may say that we impute to neither side, and to no person on either side, any unworthy or dishonourable motives. We believe that those gentlemen who at present hold many of the so-called spurious documents do so in the firm faith that they are genuine. On the other hand, so far as we can determine, the overwhelming preponderance of expert testimony is to the effect that a great number of the new documents which have lately seen the light are undoubtedly forged. In these circumstances we need not point out the extraordinary gravity of this question, not only as it affects Scotsmen all the world over, but Englishmen, Americans, Australians—all, indeed, who hold in reverence everything associated with the memories of Burns and Scott. If it were to go forth to the world—as it has gone forth—and were to be believed that the cunning hand of the forger had successfully invaded the province of the hallowed relics of our greatest dead, then would faith be shaken in what has hitherto been regarded as genuine and sacred. Obviously, therefore, if any means exist whereby the truth may be discovered, those means ought to be adopted without delay, and there has been unfortunately too much delay already. It is in the confident belief that such means are now available that we reopen the question. We need not point out here in detail the way by which we believe the truth can be ascertained, but we may mention that it cannot prove effectual unless those persons concerned are animated by a real desire for bringing the truth to light. We can but appeal to them and await the result. We fully recognise the unsatisfactory character of a journalistic inquiry. It cannot possess a tithe of the weight which would attach to an official or judicial investigation, but the gravity and the urgency of the case, and the apparent impossibility of discovering any other method of settlement, must be our excuse, if excuse be needed.







# THE GREAT FORGERIES OF OLD MSS.

## "MORE CURIOSITIES OF LITERATURE."

### I.

THERE has been of late years, we are assured, a most systematic and wholesale forgery of letters purporting to be written by Scott and Burns. These forgeries, which are said to be manufactured in Edinburgh, carry upon them such marks of genuineness as to have deceived many 'cute collectors; they are executed with a skill compared with which the forgeries of Chatterton and Ireland were but infants' efforts; they have been sold at public auctions, and by the hands of booksellers, to collectors of experience and rank—a well-known nobleman in the neighbourhood being included in the number of the dupes—and the imposition has extended to books purporting to bear the signature of Robert Burns.

The ease with which even the most wary can be taken in by forged letters is well illustrated by the famous Shelley and Byron forgeries in 1859—two of the most mischievous examples of the most mischievous class of literary impostures, and well worthy of a passing note. In that year Mr Moxon published a volume of letters from the pen of Shelley, addressed to various individuals, with a long introduction by Robert Browning. Mr Palgrave, while on a visit to Alfred Tennyson, picked up the volume from a table in the poet's library, and detected in one of the letters a portion of an article on Florence, written for the *Quarterly Review* in 1840, by his father, Sir Francis Palgrave. This was sufficient to put Mr Moxon on the scent. At the General Post Office the letters were, after strict examination, declared to be genuine, "to the best of the belief" of the clerks. The postmarks were then compared with the postmarks of Byron's genuine letters to Mr Murray from the same cities in the same month and year, and addressed to the same place—London. Here they failed to answer the question. Where "Ravenna," on a genuine letter, was in a small, sharp type—in the Shelley letter it was in a large uncertain type; and in the letters from Venice the post-mark was stamped in an *italic*, and not, as in the Shelley specimens, in a *Roman* letter. In other respects—seals, handwriting, manner, and even matter—everything seemed undoubtedly genuine. The letters had been bought at an auction at the well-known rooms of Sotheby & Wilkinson's, where they had been sent by Mr White, a London bookseller.

The onus of the matter then rested on Mr White, who subsequently published in pamphlet form a long and rambling account of the manner in which he had purchased them from "a well-dressed, lady-like young person," who called upon him at different periods, giving very little account of herself, and still less of the manner in which the letters had come into her possession. In fact, the woman was much akin to "the man in a clergyman's band, but with a lawyer's gown," who brought Pope's letters to Curll. Nor was Mr Moxon the only publisher deceived by Mr White, as no less a personage than Byron's publisher, Mr John Murray, had purchased from the same source 47 letters of Lord Byron, for which he gave £123, 7s. 6d.—a bad bargain for him, as one and all proved to be forgeries.

From various signs of the times, not to be passed unnoticed by those who watch and weigh, there appear to be cleverer scholars of the White school at work among us. Paper for the manufacture of forgeries is easily obtained—the cut-off ends of old rent rolls,

and the fly-leaves of old books with contemporary water-marks, are sufficient for the purpose; while, as for the ink, were not the marginal notes in the infamous Collier folio of Shakespeare written in sepia mixed with a little Indian ink, and did not Ireland in his forgeries use an ink made by blending various liquids used in the marbling of paper for bookbinding? With regard to the handwriting, with published *fac-simile* reproductions at hand of "The Lament of Mary Queen of Scots," "Tam o' Shanter," and other poems of Burns, freely reproduced in the larger editions of the poet, material enough for innumerable bogus letters is at the command of the would-be literary forger, even were he only to trace the words, as did the notorious Pigott.

Be that as it may, there are many new Burns manuscripts in the market about the genuineness of which grave doubts must be expressed, and these doubts are not confined, we regret to say, to letters and poems of the national bard, but may be extended to other documents, such as Rebellion or Jacobite papers, Solemn Leagues and Covenants, and letters of Sir Walter Scott. In May 1891, it may be recollected, there was brought to the hammer in George Street, Edinburgh, what were styled "The Rillbank Crescent Manuscripts," formed by a Mr James Mackenzie, who stated that he had had the items in his possession for twenty-five years, but forgot to add the source of his acquisitions. Strong disbelief was cast upon the authenticity of the documents exposed for sale, and the prices fetched for the manuscripts were in fair keeping with the disbelief, five letters by Burns—one of them with a poem—bringing only prices between one and two guineas, a song in the handwriting of the poet realising but 30s., and a discharge for £3, granted and signed by Burns, changing hands for the ridiculous sum of 32s.!

These prices were quite sufficient to prove the worthlessness of the lots. Since that time Mr Mackenzie has been offering for sale to numerous collectors similar manuscripts, frequently with—more frequently without—the success which he anticipated.

We may explain at the outset that this question has long engaged the serious attention of experts, both collectors and dealers, in Scotland and England. We ourselves, though pretending to no expert knowledge of the subject, caused diligent inquiry to be made into the matter some two years ago, and we then found ample evidence of a widespread belief, among the best authorities, in the existence of a large number of spurious documents. On the other hand, there were gentlemen of experience who professed their entire belief in the genuineness of the doubtful manuscripts; and in face of this conflict of testimony, and the apparent impossibility of procuring anything substantial to submit to the public judgment, we let the matter rest for a time. Within the past few months, however, circumstances have arisen which have revived interest in the subject, and created hopes that some means will at last be found of setting at rest this vexed and important question.

For this prospect we are partly indebted to two sources—to the *Cummock Express* and to Mr James Mackenzie, chemist, 45 Forrest Road, Edinburgh, the gentleman already referred to. This change of prospect arose in a very simple way. One day in August last—the 12th, we think—there appeared in the little Ayrshire paper the following modest letter, with introduction:—

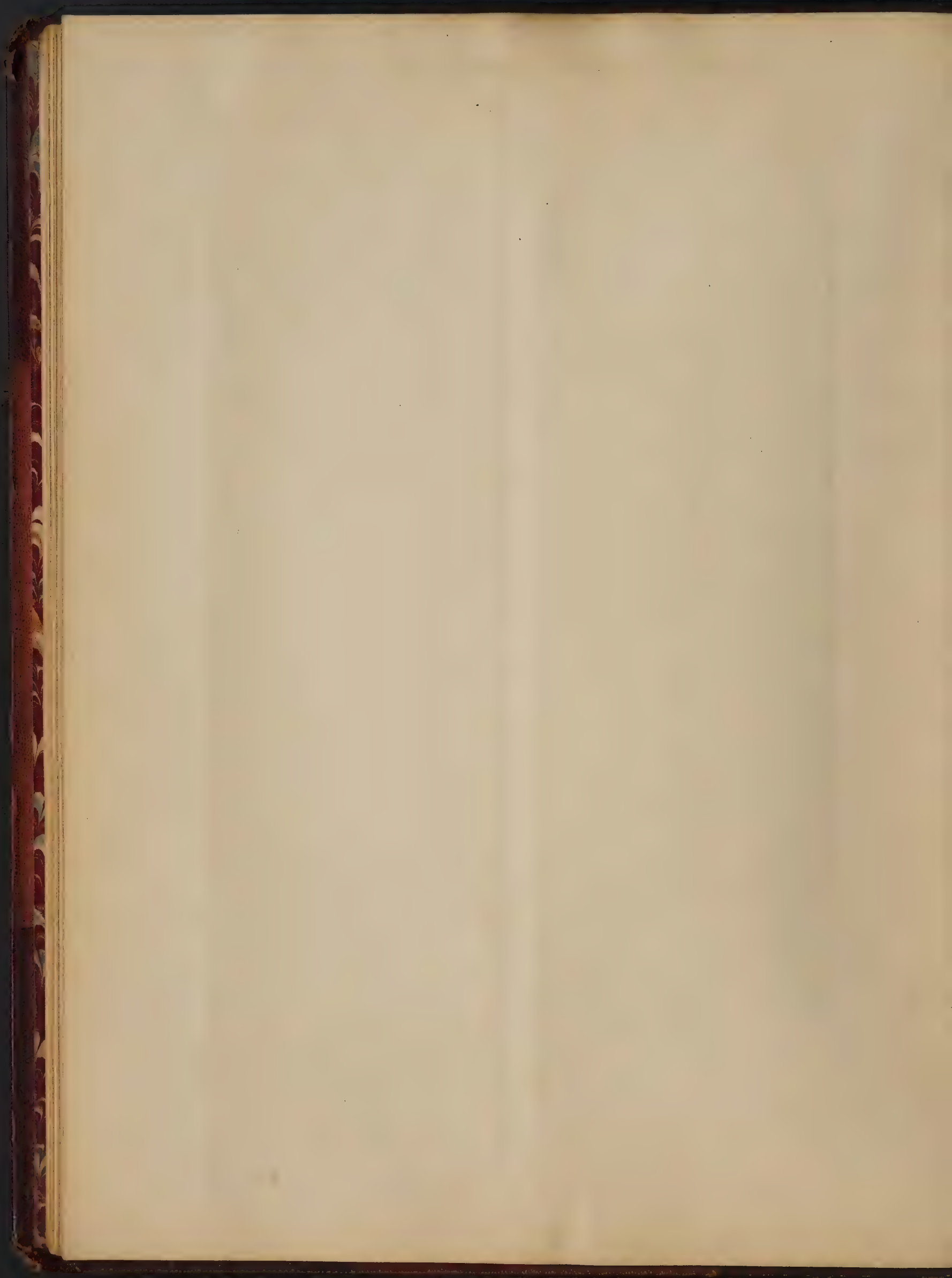
#### UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF ROBERT BURNS.

Mr James Mackenzie, chemist, 45 Forrest Road, Edinburgh, an industrious and intelligent collector of MSS., has favoured us with a perusal of a letter which has every mark of genuineness, and which has never—so far as we know—been published. It is addressed "Mr John Hill, weaver, Cumnock," of whom, or of his connections or descendants, however, we can find no trace. The year is not given, but as it is dated from Mauchline, it would seem to have been written about the time of the poet's marriage. The following is a copy of the letter:—

"Mauchline, June 11th.

"MY DEAR SIR,—It is indeed impossible for me to speak upon such a subject as the loss you have suffered. Allow me, however, to send you this expression of my sympathy and sorrow at the loss of a friend. It is another part of ourselves gone when we lose a friend. God keep those we have left, as very few are worth the praying for, and ourselves probably least of all. I was much pleased at your expression in your intimation to me, as I am now aware that you understood my meaning and character, and that







although our last meeting was noisy, I hope you took no umbrage at anything spoken by Mr Nicol, whose character is somewhat noisy in its expression. Believe me, I did not intend to go beyond anything that was unfriendly, and your communication has shewn me that. I am waiting to see you.—Believe me to be, yours most affectionately,

“ROBT. BURNS.”

Here was at length a little clue which, diligently followed up, might serve to unfold the great mystery. Not being in the secrets of the Cumnock journalist, we do not know under what circumstances he came to write the introduction, but that he did so in good faith we do not for a moment doubt. But to proceed. This letter provoked an interesting—to many persons an intensely interesting—correspondence, which we purpose in the first place briefly summarising and subsequently publishing in full, this latter course being essential to a proper understanding of this mysterious business.

In the week following the publication of the “Hill” letter, a correspondent who evidently knows something of the subject, published a letter in the Cumnock paper questioning the genuineness of the Hill letter, and referring to a sale in Edinburgh of spurious Burns MSS., the property of Mr James Mackenzie, 2 Rillbank Crescent, challenged Mr Mackenzie to submit the letter to the authorities of the British Museum, and asked for the history of the “Rillbank Crescent collection.”

To this “Mr James Mackenzie, F.S.A., Scot.,” replied ignoring the nameless correspondent as “a dealer whose craft is in danger,” and stating that the letter is “fully attested by those who are competent to judge, including a respected descendant of the author.”

To this Mr Colvin-Scott, of Brookwood, Surrey, a well-known collector replied, as did also the “nameless correspondent.” Mr Colvin-Scott pressed Mr Mackenzie to submit the letter to the British Museum; so did the correspondent, the latter offering to hand a guinea to the Kilmarnock Burns Federation if the letter was pronounced genuine, and giving a quotation from the *Edinburgh* of 26th May 1891 of a report of the sale in Edinburgh of the so-called Rillbank Collection, which the auctioneer, though he did not guarantee its genuineness, yet believed to be genuine. The prices, as we have said, ranged from 30s. to 67s. 6d. for poems and manuscripts—sums quite sufficient to prove the worthlessness of the lots.

These, said Mr Mackenzie in a subsequent letter, had been in his collection for twenty-five years, and he stated further that he had been a collector of Burnsiana, &c., had had ample experience of Burns MSS., and that personally he was of opinion that it was most desirable to have every attempt at forgery of MSS. exposed.

Nothing could be more encouraging than this.

Referring further to the challenged letter, Mr Mackenzie said it had been submitted to the most experienced critic known to exist, who was prepared, if need be, to give his oath that Robert Burns wrote it, that he was himself perfectly satisfied that the letter in question was a genuine writing of the poet, and that no one who had seen it had any other opinion. Mr Mackenzie, at the conclusion of his letter, got quite jolly, “Let us lay all our disputes aside,” he said, “and have a song! which may be followed by something more substantial,”—though what that something is remains to be seen.

A “Song to the Rosebud” is then printed, “the original to be seen at my address” (not given.) The composition is certainly very unlike Burns, though the Cumnock editor vouches for its genuineness.

As an interlude a letter appeared in the same paper, dated 19 George Street, Edinburgh, and signed “James Stillie,” stating that his attention had been drawn to the correspondence. “Mr Mackenzie,” he said, “is known here as a high-class amateur manuscript collector, and he would never keep a doubtful manuscript. I have carefully examined his Burns manuscript, paper, writing, and subject, and it has left no doubt but that it is a genuine document.”

This is followed by the Cumnock editor stating that “Mr Stillie is not only the oldest but one of the most highly respected booksellers in Edinburgh, and a collector of Burns’ manuscripts, having perhaps passed more of these through his hands than any other man, and whose testimony to the genuineness of those in Mr Mackenzie’s possession is of the greatest weight.”

May it be asked if this is “the most experienced critic known to exist,” referred to by Mr Mackenzie in his letter?

Mr Colvin Scott, in the *Express* of 28th October, referred to this letter, and said Mr Mackenzie might be known to Mr Stillie as a high class amateur manuscript

collector, but that his name was associated with the sale of the “Rillbank Crescent Letters,” and Mr Colvin-Scott offered £5 to the Kilmarnock Federation of Burns Clubs, if his opinion that this MS. was spurious were not confirmed by the British Museum or the Advocates’ Library.

This was the second challenge given to Mr Mackenzie to prove his MS. genuine, but he accepted none, alleging that the opinion of the British Museum was laughed at in Edinburgh, and preferring apparently the opinion of Mr Stillie, who had some of the “same paper” in his collection.

The rest of the correspondence may be left to explain itself as it is unfolded. It is sufficient to mention here that Mr Mackenzie posed as an amateur collector, “F.S.A. Scot.,” and scorned to be classed as a “dealer.” Now we are doing Mr Mackenzie no injustice in saying that he has submitted many manuscripts to purchasers singly and in lots, just as dealers do, and the only difference that we can see is that Mr Mackenzie has taken to presenting portions of his collection to various institutions and societies throughout the country. The Town Council of Edinburgh, returned thanks the other day for “a pass signed by Prince Charles Edward” (which, it is to be hoped, will turn out more valuable than the Burns Discharge sold at the Rillbank sale), while another Burns document presented to Ayr has been returned by London and Edinburgh experts with the suggestive endorsement—“spurious.”

Now we come to the testing clause. Mr Mackenzie in his capacity of “F.S.A.,” collector, dealer, or what not, has presented to public institutions, and has submitted to many prominent men for sale and opinion, numerous MSS.; many of these have been pronounced by persons of the highest authority in these matters to be spurious. Among other documents he has two copies of the “Solemn League and Covenant,” one we believe on parchment. The value of these may be imagined when we state that only one other copy of the “Solemn League and Covenant” on parchment is believed to be in existence. Mr Mackenzie has also made known that he possesses a “Scots Wha Hae.” The whereabouts of each of the few known copies of the famous Address in the handwriting of the poet is well known, and if this copy is genuine, then indeed is it most important and very valuable, for it ought to be worth at least £100, if not £150.

Now our position ought to be as clear as at present we choose to make it. There is in existence a mass of MSS. which is being questioned by the highest experts in Scotland and England; Mr Mackenzie has presented and has submitted for sale, documents pronounced to be spurious; among them documents of great value if genuine. In these circumstances is it not reasonable that his countrymen should look with confidence to Mr Mackenzie, as “an industrious and intelligent collector of MSS.” to help them to unravel the mystery? The documents came into his possession by one or by many channels. They can be traced; they must be traced. It will not do for any man, however eminent, however much respected, however honourable—and, as we have said, we do not question Mr Mackenzie’s honour, but only his judgment—and there will be profound disappointment and dissatisfaction if Mr Mackenzie, having in his power the means of unlocking the secret, takes refuge in his shell and refuses to come out and to do this great service.

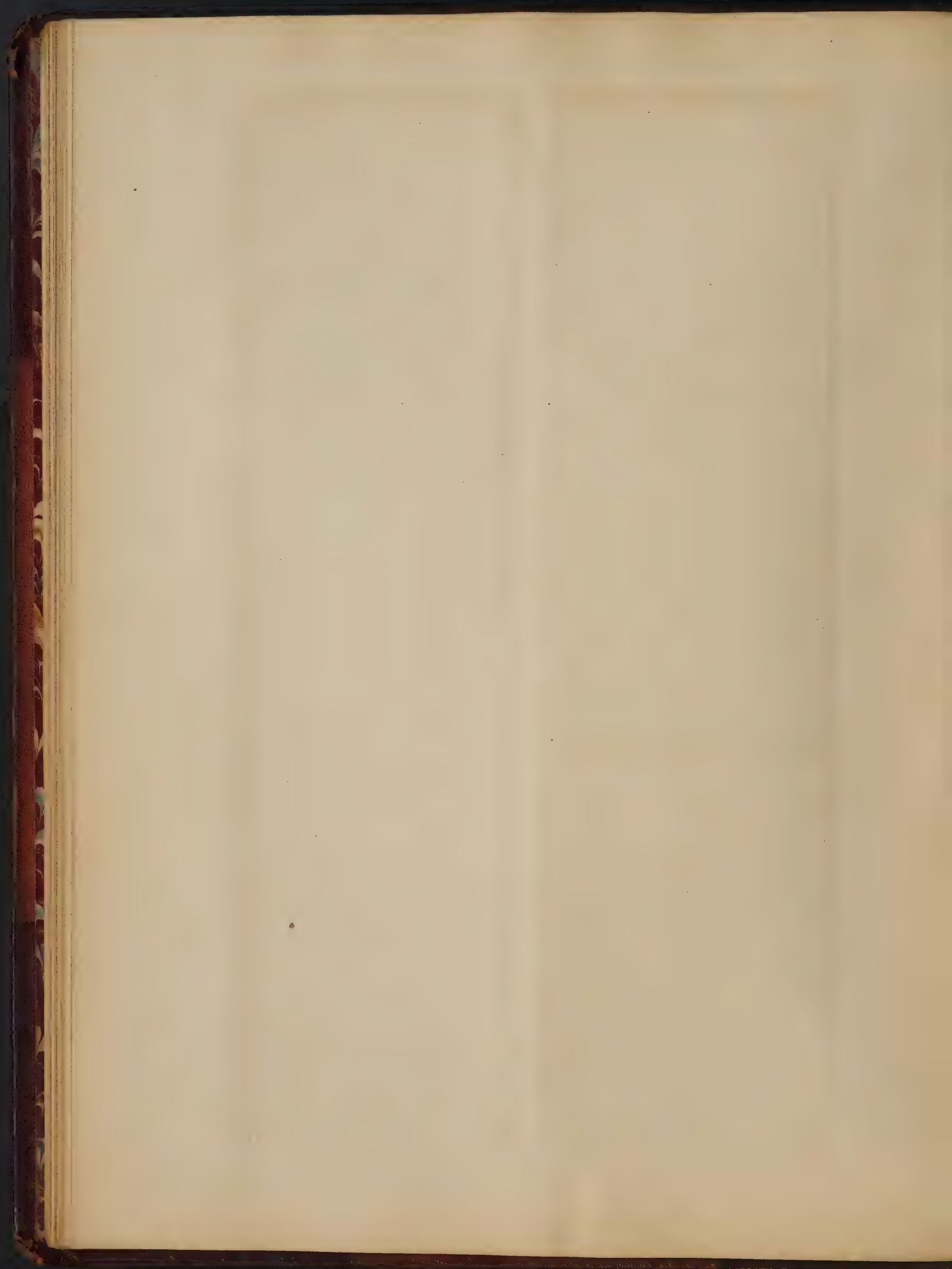
We shall now proceed to give the Cumnock correspondence in chronological order, merely mentioning that until its publication is completed we do not intend to publish any original correspondence on the subject. A full account of the Cumnock letters is essential to a proper understanding of this remarkable question:—

#### THE CORRESPONDENCE.

(From a correspondent in Cumnock Express, August 19, 1892.)

In expressing my scepticism as to the genuineness of the letter in last week’s *Cumnock Express*, purporting to be from Robert Burns to John Hill, weaver, Cumnock, I do so under the disadvantage of not having seen the letter itself. Many such have recently been foisted on that badly burnt bairn—the Burns collector—who from prudential reasons has resolved to be wise hereafter and look the gift horse closely in the mouth. Since the sale in Edinburgh by a certain Mr Smith and a certain Mr Dobie on behalf of the widow of the late Mr Ferrier—law agent to Sir Walter Scott—who had an excellent portfolio of Scott, Burns, and Rebellion MSS., spurious MSS. (one and all of them cleverly executed, and not infrequently docketed on the back by such editors of the poet as Currie and Hogg), transcripts mostly of poems or songs, sometimes a lease has been copied and sometimes an inscription on a book has been invented (for no realm in







which the Poet Walked has been too sacred for the incursions of the forger; the letters, so far as I have seen, are one and all inventions, as I take the John Hill letter to be, and like it too in being unimportant in their subject matter, otherwise detection would be easy. Such have been publicly sold in such centres as Edinburgh (where the pawnbroker has sometimes been the first victim) and London, where respectable buyers and sellers have freely given their "money for that which is not bread." But the experts who after all constitute the inner circle of the Burns cult have been consulted, and the fraud has been detected, and so the condemned documents are being sold by those in the "know" without warrantary, or hawked by irresponsible persons, who give it forth that the relic they are honoured by having the privilege of offering belongs to a person (generally a lady) in needy circumstances, and whose heart is being broken at the thought of parting with it; but the plant in the main is being fixed on the keenest of Burns collectors—the American Scot.

The difficulties of the Burns forger are manifold. He has not only the difficulty of choosing his subject—and here his range is limited only by his own imagination—but he has the difficulty of finding paper, not to speak of the difficulty of inking it to look like the singularly beautiful Roman hand of Burns, which Matthew Arnold could never reconcile with a common-place portrait he had come to regard as the presentiment of the poet. Modern paper, which is largely made of almost everything except what paper should be made of, is no temptation to the forger. His quest is the real Shneon pure, made from Burns's own

Snaw-white seventeen hunder linen!

and such in the ample size, used by the poet himself, is not readily found. Old ledgers have been ransacked, and the fly-leaves have been stripped from old folios, which usually yield single but hardly ever double sheets; and when such are found they are not infrequently gilt, almost always cut, and but seldom rough on the edges as was the Virgin paper of the poet. But though his paper is generally "scrapy," the forger is not always without luck. But be his paper what it may, his ink is of necessity the most modern of modern productions; and to give his handiwork the look of age he has to have recourse to many inventions. What these are only those versed in the tricks of the forger can tell. Some glimmerings were recently given at a book sale in Edinburgh, where were exposed genuine and spurious MSS. of the poet, which, in the absence of a treaty on the arts of the deceiver, or the confession—death-bed or otherwise—of the forger himself, must for the moment remain the limit of our information.

The auctioneer explained that those of the MSS. that had been challenged, and which are said to have been the property of Mr James Mackenzie, 2 Rillbank Crescent, Edinburgh, had unfortunately a "doctored" look. Possibly, for some reason unknown to him, they had been "damped and ironed;" but while he himself had no belief in their falsity, he declined to guarantee their genuineness. But "doctored" as such undoubtedly are—even to the vanishing of the bloomy tone of the papers—the inks used by the indorsers are of the exact same colour as that with which the document itself is written—a fact which is only possible on the hypothesis that the ink came from one and the same bottle; and this monotony of impossible ink—inks which, were the documents authentic, would be separated from each other and from us by something like half a century, is emphasised by the similarity of the various pretended writings, which have a curious family likeness, explainable only on the assumption that they are the product of one and the same hand.

So much for the general character of the fraudulent MSS. associated with the name of Burns. Except that they are more numerous, or more widely blown, they hardly differ from those circulated in the name of Sir Walter Scott. Publicity alone will put a limit to their free circulation. The *Cummock Express* did a public service in publishing the John Hill letter, which I nail to the counter as one would a bad shilling. I cannot believe that Burns wrote the last sentence but one of this letter:—"Believe me, I did not intend to go beyond anything that was unfriendly (sic), and your communication has shown me that." No two ideas could be less apposite than the intention of the poet, which could only be known to himself, and the communication of his mythical correspondent. I am the reverse of rich, but rather than that this letter should pass unchallenged, I am willing to pay a guinea to the Kilmarnock Burns Federation, if the authorities of the British Museum pronounce the letter

to be in the autograph of the poet. I therefore challenge the holder of the letter—Mr James Mackenzie, 45 Forrest Road, Edinburgh—(not he of 2 Rillbank Crescent) to submit the letter to the judgment of the authority I have named, and which beyond all doubt is competent to give a judgment that would be accepted as finale; and whose pronouncement, should it be in his favour, would increase the money value of his possession, and should it be otherwise (by tracing the letter to the forger or his accomplice), which, armed with the authority of the British Museum, Mr Mackenzie would be in the position to do, he would confer a great service on all true lovers of the poet.

(From *Cummock Express*, August 26.)  
BURNS M.S. LETTER.

SIR,—I observe in the last issue of the *Cummock Express* that a nameless correspondent had taken great offence at a letter written by the poet Burns, which is in my possession, a copy of which you were good enough to publish in the previous issue. Your correspondent admits that he has not seen the letter in question. This does not seem, however, to be of any importance to him, as he proceeds in a remarkable manner to condemn it to his entire satisfaction. Like all boycotters he does his work best behind the dyke, and there is so much of this in his remarks that I am led to believe that only one who has become possessed with the idea "that his craft is in danger," or, in other words, that the writer is a dealer who could have penned such a letter. If so, the worth of his remarks are patent. I would have your correspondent to know that I take no further notice of such letters unless he gives his name, occupation, and address. Meanwhile, the Burns letter referred to is a genuine production of the poet, attested fully by those who are thoroughly competent to judge, including a respected descendant of the author.—I remain, &c.

JAMES MACKENZIE,  
F.S.A. Scot.

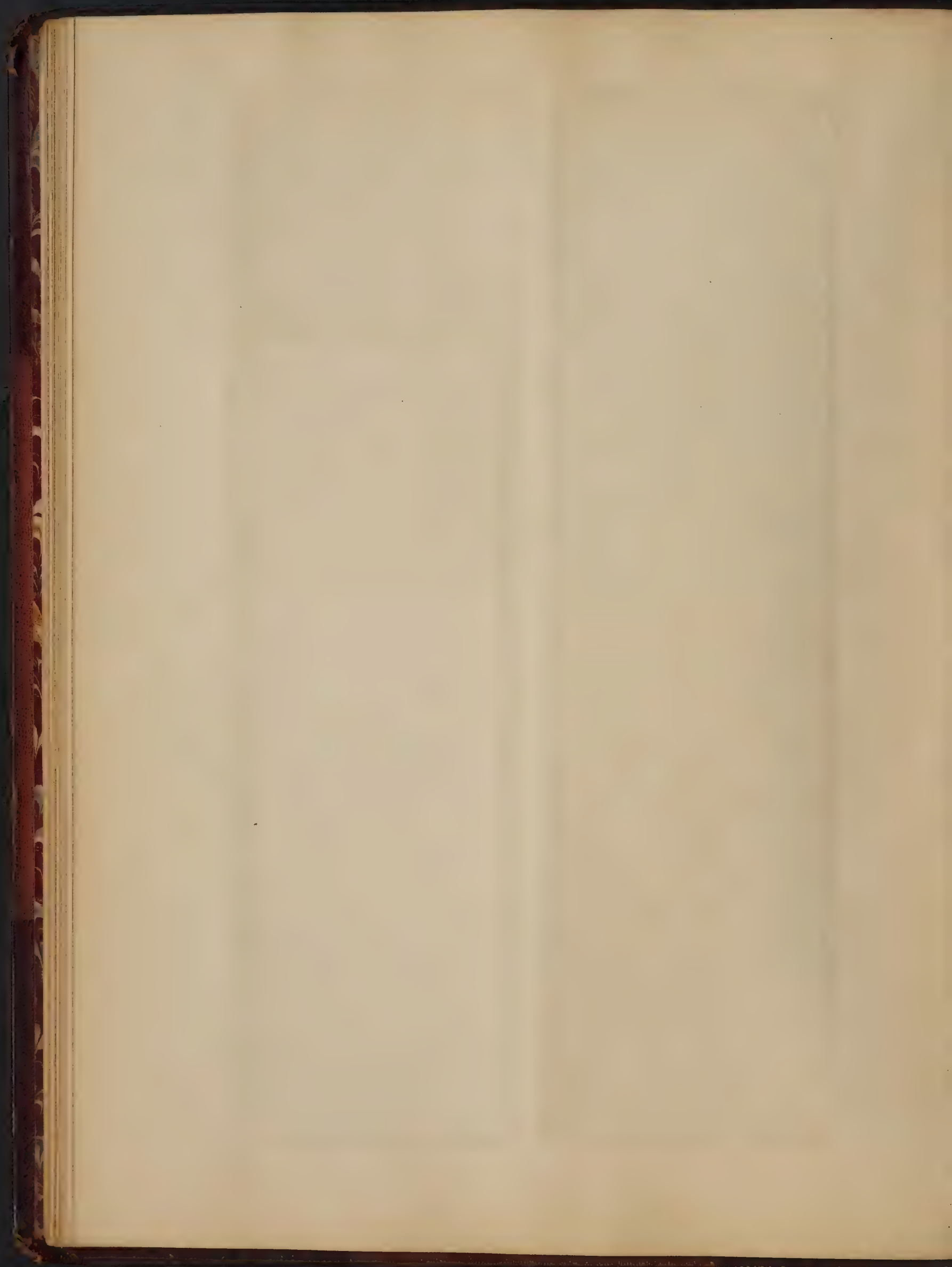
(From a correspondent in *Cummock Express*, September 2.)

Than the reply of Mr Mackenzie nothing could be more unsatisfactory. He writes as if it were your correspondent and not his Burns letter that is on trial. My identity has nothing to do with the falsity or otherwise of his pretended letter. Anonymity is one of the characteristics of a free press; and Mr Mackenzie—wise man that he is—not satisfied with his own judgment as to the genuineness of the letter, has had it "attested fully by those who are competent to judge, including a respected descendant of the author." Mr Mackenzie ought to name his witnesses, and I ask him to do so. To "attest" a document of national importance—which this pretended letter undoubtedly is—is a public act, and Mr Mackenzie is in duty bound to give the names of the attestors and the nature of their attestations the same publicity as he gave the letter itself. On reflection he will see that this is but fair—the letter and the attestations being as much one as the Siamese twins—and when he has the pen in hand he might give the readers of the *Cummock Express* (which circulates not only in the very heart of the land of Burns, but which follows the wandering Scot, who, wherever he may settle himself, next to a church and a school, and sometimes prior to the setting up of either, founds a Burns Club) a history of the letter.

Mr Mackenzie could have chosen no better medium than the *Cummock Express* to ascertain the *bona fides* of "Mr John Hill, weaver, Cummock;" and ninety and nine out of every hundred of its readers has had his or her appetite whetted as to the fortunes of this letter, which (if it be genuine) has for a hundred years been hidden from the public eye. At this moment a three-volume edition of the works of Burns is in the press; and who can doubt that the editor, were the letter authenticated by the British Museum, would be glad to insert it in his book, and by inserting it would he not for ever link the name of Mr Mackenzie, the rescuer of the letter, with that of the poet? Was ever immortality—the first and last ambition of noble souls—got on easier terms.

I say again that Mr Mackenzie's letter is an impossible letter, and that I believe it is impossible for him by the testimony of such an unimpeachable authority as I have named to father it upon Burns. This is not a mere dealer's affair; it is an affair of national importance, and Mr Mackenzie himself has made it public. Next to the importance of the letter itself is that of the testimony in favour of its genuineness, which I am surprised Mr Mackenzie should have suppressed. I have not questioned Mr Mackenzie's good faith in the matter, but I regret his having declined to test the authenticity of the letter in a way which would be creditable to himself and satisfactory to every lover of the poet. Mr Mackenzie may not







be aware that the market not only at home, but in America, is flooded with spurious MS., and the public, not having been on their guard, have been greatly deceived by them. An experienced eye can no doubt tell a Burns MS. from a Wilson-Dobie one as readily as it can tell a real from a false coin. In such matters, experience on the part of amateurs is generally dearly bought. As an old hand, I should advise beginners not to purchase Burns or Scott MSS. (nor indeed MSS. of any importance, except from those who are willing to submit such for authentication to the British Museum.) It cannot be too widely known that the British Museum, which, in the widest sense of the term, is a National Institution, quietly serves the public, without fee or reward, in this and endless other directions. Its staff, in every one of its departments, from Dr Garnett downwards, never fails to respond to any reasonable application for help; and in Mr John P. Anderson, himself a Scotchman and the author of a Bibliography of Burns, Mr Mackenzie will find an authority that will be accepted as final.

Mr Mackenzie repudiates the idea of his being a "dealer." No doubt dealers have interests, but there are dealers and dealers, and every honest dealer must be anxious once and for all to have the market cleared of the foul span of the forger. Asbestos does not dread the fire, and no dealer who has a true Burns MS. will for a moment shirk submitting it to the assay-master I have named. Being outside trade, as Mr Mackenzie himself is, the British Museum should be above suspicion. Not a "dealer," and not an expert, Mr Mackenzie must form one of the class Burns had in his eye when he wrote—

Nae difference, but bulkiest or tallest,  
With comfortable dullness in for ballast.

But to return. With the history of the John Hill letter Mr Mackenzie might give us the history of the Rillbank Crescent letters, which I have referred to in my former communication, and which are said to have been in his possession for about a quarter of a century. If it took Mr Mackenzie five-and-twenty years to discover the true character of these documents, which I hope to show are one and all false, I wonder at his confidence in his judgment of the John Hill letter. On referring to the file of the *Scotman* newspaper, regarding the sale of the Rillbank Crescent MS., under date May 26th, 1891, I find the following:—

"Before beginning the sale." . . . Mr Munro stated that he had heard doubts thrown upon these manuscripts. For his own part he had examined them pretty carefully, and he did not for one participate in these doubts. He believed the documents were thoroughly genuine. One man, it was said, had written them; if that man was produced he (Mr Munro) would say he was a genius. While some people said they were forgeries, and he said they were not, yet his word must not be taken for it; purchasers must judge for themselves. There must be no question about them afterwards. The sale was then proceeded with. Five autograph letters by Burns, one of them with a poem entitled "Dysarts' Carles," respectively realised prices varying between one and two guineas. In connection with what in the catalogue was described as a song by Dr Blacklock, "For Lack of Gold," in the handwriting of Robert Burns, signed by James Hogg, the Auctioneer stated that it had been submitted to, among others, Sir William Fettes Douglas, and he said he thought that was a mistake on the part of Burns or somebody else, as Blacklock was not the author of the song. The song was sold for 30s. A discharge for £3, granted and signed by Burns, was sold for 32s.; a manuscript signed by him realised £3, 7s. 6d.; a poem written and signed by him changed hands at £2, 2s.; and a poem to Clarinda was sold for £3." If Mr MacKenzie was mistaken as to the character of these documents—the nature of which is more eloquently conveyed by these figures than by any words at my command—why, I ask, should he be so confident as he professes to be in his opinion of John Hill's letter? Anyhow, any light that he may be able to throw upon any or all of these documents cannot but enlarge our knowledge and bring us nearer to a right discernment of the true and the false in MSS. of National Poet.

In view of such facts as these, need we wonder that a body of collectors are clubbing together, for mutual help and protection against the wiles of the forger, and forming a society, to be called the Society of Archivists. Its headquarters is to be in London, and Mr H. Saxe Wyndham is acting as interim secretary. In conclusion, I repeat my offer to pay a guinea to the Kilmarnock Federation of Burns Clubs if the British Museum pronounces the John Hill letter to be other than an imposition.

(From *Cumnock Express* of same date.)

UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF ROBT. BURNS.

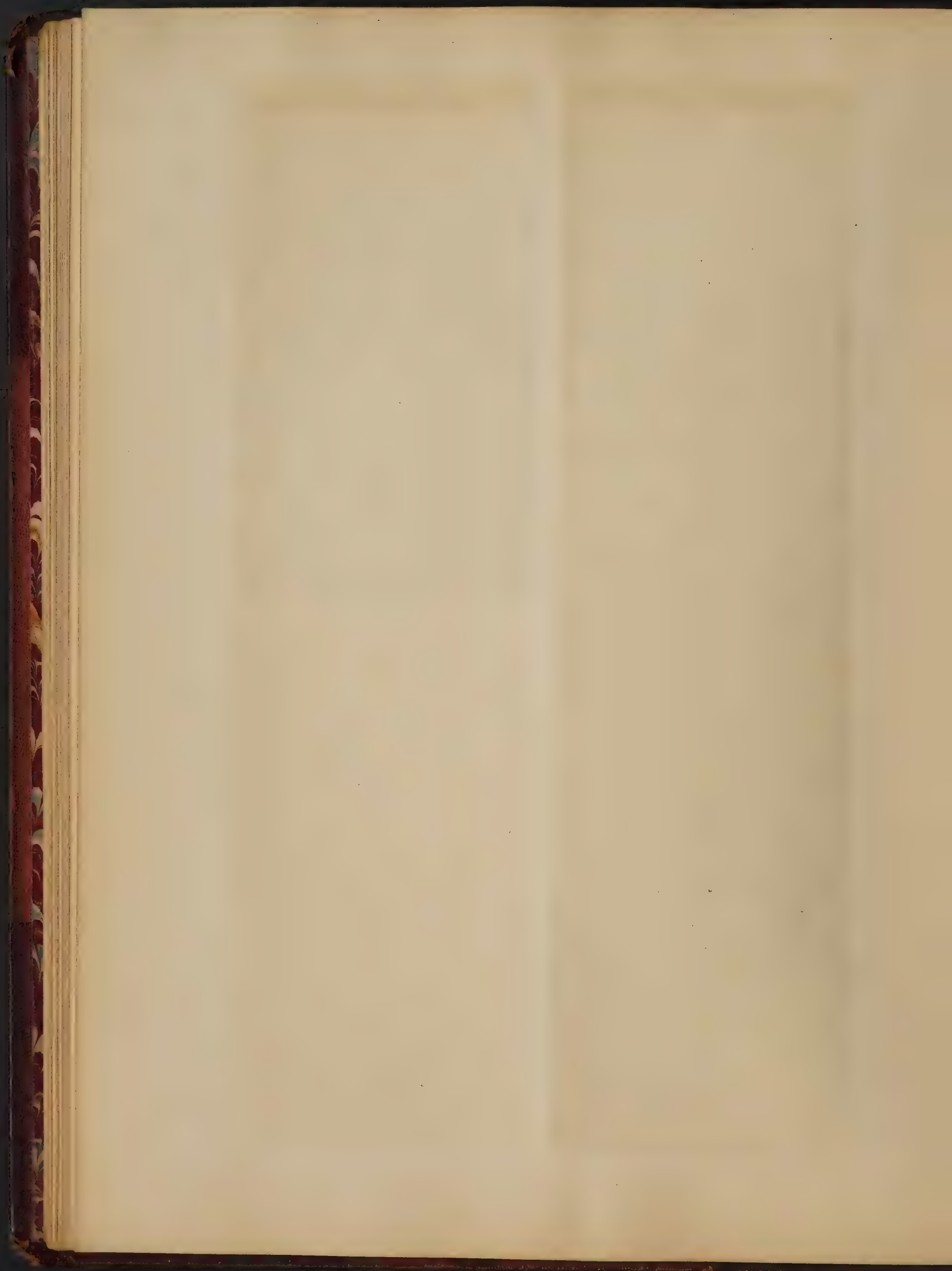
SIR,—As an MSS. collector, I would beg of you to give me a little space in your valuable journal to say a few words anent your correspondent's long and interesting letter on the above. I sincerely hope that Mr James Mackenzie will submit his Burns letter to the British Museum authorities for inspection, for, as your correspondent admits, there are none better able or more competent to judge whether this said letter is authentic or not. If Mr Mackenzie has no doubt as to its genuineness, he surely will have no objection to accepting the offer of your correspondent, and enable the Kilmarnock Burns Federation to make an addition to its funds. The warning conveyed in your correspondent's letter is well timed, for the number of Burns and Scott forgeries in Scotland is at present considerable, and it appears to me iniquitous that they should frequently be sold to young collectors, and the intelligent public be offered such worthless trash. I have seen many myself, and have heard curious stories of their manufacturers. It is to be hoped that the Archivist Society will take the matter up, and attempt to put an end to the continued sale of these forged documents. In that monumental and excellent work, 'A Guide to the Collector of Historical Documents, Literary MSS., and Autograph Letters,' by the Rev. Dr Scott and Mr Samuel Davey, F.R.S.L., published last year, I find the following, which may be of interest to those who have followed this correspondence:— "The greatest caution must be observed in purchasing, especially at the present time, when forged specimens are being manufactured with unprecedented daring, through the encouragement given by the simple and unwary, who are deluded into purchasing by advertisements and other unorthodox channels, instead of choosing the safe and regular plan of buying from well known and respectable dealers" (p. 35.) I hope, sir, you will pardon my having taken up so much of your valuable space in making a few comments on a subject which I hope is not ended here.—I am, &c.

H. D. COLVIN-SCOTT.

Brookwood, Surrey.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]







## THE GREAT FORGERIES OF OLD MSS.

### II.

We publish to-day the conclusion of the Cumnock correspondence respecting the alleged spurious MSS.

We are led to understand that Mr Mackenzie in order to satisfy himself of the *bona-fide* character of the documents in his possession, himself took the precaution sometime ago of submitting them to a body of gentlemen in whose judgment he had full confidence, and that they unhesitatingly expressed their belief in their genuineness. This Mr Mackenzie regarded as a sufficient offset to the vague accusations made against one or two documents. We do not doubt—and further we may state that in all our investigations we have not heard the slightest suggestion made by anyone against the *bona-fides* of Mr Mackenzie personally; and we made that plain enough yesterday. Nevertheless, we adhere to the opinion we expressed yesterday, that a private inquiry of the kind referred to, while a proof of a desire to act in the most straightforward way is not sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the case.

It was stated yesterday that "documents" presented by Mr Mackenzie had been pronounced "spurious." This should have been "one document." The other documents referred to were not "presented."

The name of Mr Colvill-Scott of Brookwood, Surrey, was yesterday erroneously spelt Colvin-Scott.

(From *The Cumnock Express*, September 9.)

#### BURNS' MS. LETTER.

SIR,—Your anonymous correspondent still shrinks from giving your readers his name and address. Nor am I much surprised at it. A free press indeed, if the use he makes of it be to do as he does. I am glad that he is so far ashamed of himself—the tradition which is attached to Jedburgh, of first hanging and then trying, is too old for modern notions, though that is his favourite mode of action. There is much in his voluble remarks that could be answered; but till he comes like an honourable man into the open I'll pass him by as unworthy of notice. The letter of Mr Colvill-Scott, however, calls for some remarks. I am strongly of the opinion that it is most desirable to have every attempt at forgery of MSS. exposed. Every collector has an interest in this. But what are the facts of the case? So far as I can learn, these are that for some time past a number of MSS. have come to light. These have not found their way, it would seem, through the usual dealers, and some of them have been fairly successful in raising a cry first of suspicion, then a shake of the head with a shrug of the shoulders, and lately, by the deliberate statement that they are forgeries. Now, if there was the least truth in this, would it not be reasonable to ask these parties to produce one and let it be exhibited. They say these are plentiful. I have not seen one yet, nor can I find one, and what is more, few but those who repeat the cry seem to know anything about them. Is it not patent to every honest man that there can but be one purpose in all this—viz., to despoil the value of genuine MSS., even when possessed by private parties. To me it matters not how many there may be—when they are genuine. But for any one to declare a letter to be a forgery which he has not seen is a true indication of what has to be contended with. Some time ago a letter appeared, but duly signed, condemning a letter said to be by Robert Burns. This letter has been submitted to the most experienced critic known to exist, and, after careful examination, he stated he was prepared to give his oath, if need be, that Robert Burns wrote it. Personally, I am perfectly satisfied that the letter in question is a genuine writing of the poet, and no one who has seen it has had any other opinion. Since the year 1851 I have been intimately connected with what relates to Burns; residing in Dumfries, I learned not a little of him about that time from his intimate friends, and since from his best known relatives. During all this time, I have also had the intimate knowledge of his MS., and this led me to become a collector. The candlestick which his widow gave with other things to Mrs Rankin, wife of Bailie Rankin, Dumfries, for kindness done in the day of her deep distress, all passed out of this family into my possession many years ago, and when I

learned what had been done by the poet during his evenings 'neath its light at his own fireside I valued it highly, and placed it in the cottage where he was born. It would not surprise me were some anonymous correspondent to write and declare it a forgery also. Luckily, I had become possessor long before all this craze began. But, to the point, I hold and fearlessly state that so far as I can learn no one has exhibited a forged Burns MS. The only thing which I have found was that a *fac simile* was attempted once to be passed for genuine. This has been made not a little of, but he must be simple indeed who does not know the one from the other, and sure am I that all the Burns MS. I have yet seen or possess will outlive this miserable subterfuge. Need your readers wonder that as a private collector, possessing at least some knowledge of the subject, I resent the dictation of some unknown jobber, and as there exists an interest concerning any writing of the poet hitherto unpublished, so far as I can discover, I am quite willing to submit further contributions, and call Burns himself to witness. For a variety, this time, let it be, we lay our disputes all aside and have a song, which may be followed by something more substantial. The originals may be seen at my address. On the present occasion the verses are addressed to Miss Milne Roxburgh from Robert Burns, Ellisland.

#### TO THE ROSEBUD.

All hail to thee, thou hawmy bud,  
Thou charming child o' summer hail!  
Ilk fragrant thorn and lofty wood  
Does nod thy welcome to the vale.

See on thy lately faulted form  
Glad Phoebus smiles with cheering eye,  
While on thy head the dewy morn  
Has shed the tears o' silent joy.

The tuneful tribes frae yonder bower  
Wi' songs of joy thy presence hail:  
Then haste, thou balmy, fragrant flower,  
And gie' thy bosom to the gale.

And see the fair, industrious bee,  
With airy wheel and soothing hum,  
Flies ceaseless round thy parent tree,  
While gentle breezes trembling come.

If ruthless Liza pass this way,  
She'll pu' thee frae thy thorny stem;  
Awhile thou'lt grace her virgin breast,  
But soon thou'lt fade, my bonnie gem.

Ah! short, too short, thy rural reign,  
And yield to fate, alas! thou must;  
Bright emblem of thy virgin train,  
Thou blooms, alas! to mix wi' dust.

Sae bonnie Liza hence may learn,  
Wi' every youthful maiden gay,  
That Beauty, like the summer rose,  
In time shall wither and decay.

What will some of the croakers say of this? Maybe that Burns never existed, and that Dr Blair or some one else wrote it, as was stated lately in London concerning the poet, where, we are asked to believe, that the only real knowledge of Burns exists.—I remain, &c.

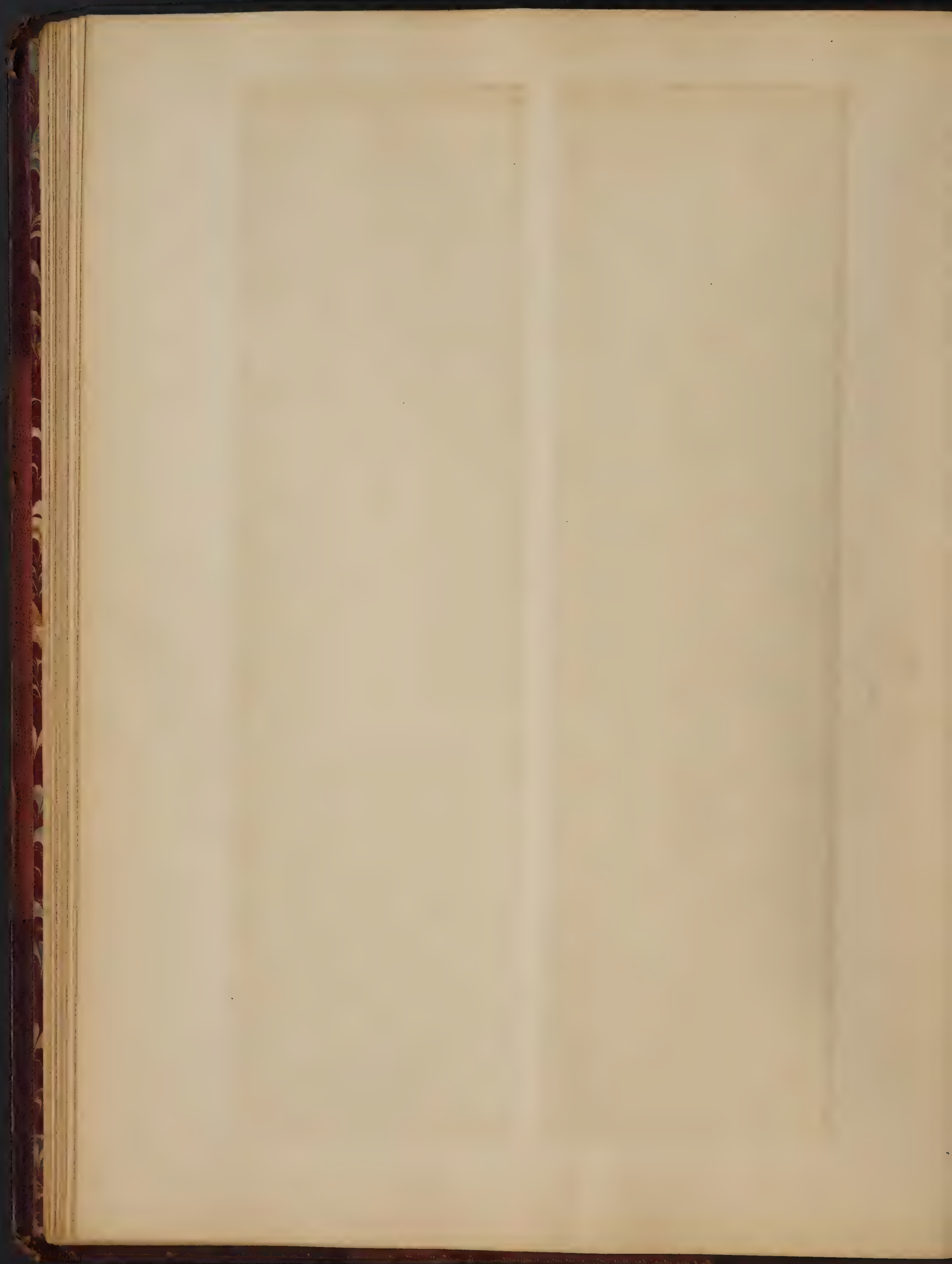
JAMES MACKENZIE, F.S.A., Scot.

(We have been favoured with a sight of the MS. of the foregoing poem, and after the closest and most careful inspection, and comparing it with the acknowledged and undoubted handwriting of the poet, we are forced to conclude that if its genuineness is doubted or denied, then such may be the fate of every scrap of the Robert Burns MSS. in existence.—Ed. *Cumnock Express*.)

(From a Correspondent in *Cumnock Express*,  
September 23.)

Mr Mackenzie is not improving his position. Nasty phrases, such as emblemish his letters, are not characteristic of a good cause; and I hope they are unworthy of his happier moments. I have not the honour of his acquaintance; and I never heard of his name in relation to Burns till the Rillbank Crescent MSS. came to be sold. For his own reputation, no less than for the protection of inexperienced collectors, I hope he will not allow the opportunity to pass without giving your readers, as the Almanacs have it, "a full and particular account" of how and when the Rillbank Crescent MSS. came into his possession, and why he allowed them to pass out of his hands for what was virtually an old song. Interesting, too, would be the history of the MSS. of the John Hill letter, and that of "The Rosebud" song, which he sets down to the credit of Burns. If Mr Mackenzie would leave the flabby regions of sentiment and condescend to the solid region of bald facts, he would cut a better figure than he is doing. His brass candlestick is wide of the mark. But does it not occur to him that if it was necessary to establish the historic character he claims for this candlestick—the authenticity of which no one seems to have called in question—that he should tell us all he knows about it, that it is, to say the least, quite as necessary for him to tell us all he knows as to the holders of these MSS., and how he came to be possessed of them.







Mr Mackenzie says he has never seen a MS. attributed to Burns that was not genuine; but that a "ory" which has "been fairly successful" has been raised against a batch that "for some time past have come to light through other than the usual dealers." Are these, I ask, the Wilson-Dobbie lot? Who are the "usual dealers" in MSS.? The majority of such pop through auction rooms, and if some are accepted as genuine and others not, as happened (not in London but in *Auld Reekie*) at the sale already referred to, I do not see that there is any ground for prejudice in the matter; nor, so far as I know, has any attempt been made to "descrie the value of genuine MSS." But suppose such an attempt has been made. What then? Refer the disputed MSS., say I, to the British Museum. The matter is simple enough. Take a case of which I have just heard, that of a forty pound (£40) lot—not by any means important, but it will serve as an illustration—that were purchased in Edinburgh by a bookseller who unsuspectingly sold them in good faith to an equally unsuspecting client. By-and-by the MSS. came under an experienced eye, who at once saw they were not in the grand Roman hand of Burns. They were returned to the bookseller, who, desirous of protecting his client's interest, had the documents tested. Having had them compared with those (in the first instance) in the portfolio of a friend, and which, in the long ago, had been purchased in Edinburgh salerooms. Between those recently "come to light," that is between now and 1887—for previous to the close of that year no suspicion existed as to the MSS. of Burns—and those of earlier purchases there was a marked difference; and the more the documents were examined the more apparent the difference became. But to make sure, all the documents were sent to an expert for his opinion, and no explanation was given as to how or where they were purchased. When the documents were returned, all the old ones were described as "true," and all the new ones as "false." Such is an example, and I wish it was the only one of what collectors have to complain of.

Mr Mackenzie, in accusing me of "first hanging and then trying" his John Hill letter, is hardly just to himself. He must be blind indeed if he does not see the difference between the composition of a document and the hand in which it is written. I said not a word as to the penmanship of the John Hill letter, nor do I say that "The Rosebud" song is not in the handwriting of the poet, but I do not for a moment believe that either the letter or the song are the composition of Burns. It is possible that the song may be in the handwriting of the poet, but that of itself does not prove that it is the outcome of his own brain. Like the letter, the song looks the stamp of the master; and Mr Mackenzie is but beating the air when he speaks of calling "Burns himself to witness," and of having received the opinion of the "most experienced critic known to exist." Till Mr Mackenzie has verified these documents by submitting them to the British Museum, and told us frankly and fully all that he knows about them, we shall regard him as the dupe of the forgers, who, clever though they undoubtedly are, have at last been found out.

(Same date.)

SIR,—I have only just seen Mr Mackenzie's last letter anent the above. He says the letter written by me "calls for some remarks," but I am unable to notice anything in his letter which specially refers to anything in mine. I should like, if space permits, to make a few comments on his last epistle. Premising that it seems curious to me that Mr Mackenzie should still feel disinclined to accept the generous offer of your correspondent, and dispatch the letter which has evoked this correspondence to London to be placed before the most experienced literary critics of this kingdom, I am quite sure that all intelligent collectors would not use the ridiculous arguments of anonymity which Mr Mackenzie does with such gusto. He seems to forget that it was he that first gave publicity to the matter. I understand Mr Mackenzie to insinuate that dealers are attempting to prove that many genuine MSS., lately come to light, are not genuine MSS. of the poet. This is nonsense, and there is no reason for the assertion. All respectable dealers are most certainly wishful that the market should be cleared of worthless paper, and only original matter dealt in. In other words, they do not want the public to be taken in with forgeries, no matter how clever they be. There is no doubt that since the last batch of forgeries were given to the world, the honest dealers have been looking to their laurels, and have at last really begun to make strenuous efforts to stop the sale of worthless rubbish. Young collectors pay dearly for being landed with it, and I myself, on returning such trash, have

even been threatened with prosecution. I am no dealer, but a collector pure and simple, and as such have had constant opportunities of seeing all kinds of forgeries, and it seems to me curious that Mr Mackenzie has never come across such. He might have seen some and thought they were real genuine autographs of Burns. Some I have seen were well done, and to some people it is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between the true and the false. I should like to know who is "the most experienced critic known to exist." It is a pity that Mr Mackenzie does not name "the most experienced critic known to exist." I wonder if he hails from London or its suburbs, or Edinburgh? As for candlesticks and other things it may be quite possible, and even probable, they are genuine articles, but we are not discussing them here; and I for one will not be drawn off the scent by his red herring. Mr Mackenzie describes the anonymous correspondent as some "unknown jobber." I am inclined to differ with him here. I have reason to believe he is neither a "jobber" nor "unknown." Just to refer to the verses which Mr Mackenzie gives—entitled "To the Rosebud"—I would ask Mr M. one question, as a Burns scholar, is he certain verses 4, 5, and 6 are by Burns? and, if so, how can he prove they are original? I am inclined to doubt them, but until Mr Mackenzie is good enough to accept your anonymous correspondent's generous offer, we can let that matter rest. If Mr Mackenzie takes so much objection to anonymity as an argument against sending his letter to London, I will make him the same offer myself, and I shall even extend it to "The Rosebud."—I am, Sir, &c.

H. D. COLVILL-SCOTT.

(Same date.)

SIR,—The time has come when all senseless objections to what is good and true in relation to Burns must be left to be answered by the Poet himself. Any man who really knows the writings of Burns should read the following lines, and having done so, consider for a moment if he cannot discover in them the sentiments of our National Bard. Some slight differences may exist in the actual writings, due no doubt to a hard quill pen, and one that has often been written with, or even to the mood in which the Poet was at the time, according to the subject in hand. I observe, when he is engaged on the sublime and heroic, he is often uneven in his lines; but to one versed in his style, however, the same cast of hand is in all. Strange, in a book which I have, written by his old teacher, Mr Murdoch, one may easily trace the style of writing of the one in the other. Therefore it is, I consider, a waste of time to do more than submit the following verses, copied from the unpublished MS. in my possession, to speak for themselves. The first is addressed to Gilbert by his brother, Robert Burns, and his Christian name is spelt in full in this instance—a thing seldom done by him:—

#### THE POOR MAN'S PRAYER.

Amidst the more important toils of state,  
The counsels labouring in thy patriot soil;  
Though Europe from thy voice expect her fate,  
And thy keen glance extend from pole to pole.

O Chatham, nursed in ancient virtues lore,  
To these sad strains incline a favouring ear,  
Think on the God whom thou and I adore,  
Nor turn un pitying from the poor man's prayer.

Ah me! how blest was once a peasant's life,  
No lawless passion swelled my even breast;  
Far from the roaring waves of civil strife,  
Sound were my slumbers, and my heart at rest.

I ne'er for guilty painful passions roved,  
But taught by Nature and by choice to wed  
From all the hamlet, culled whom best I loved  
With her I shared my heart, with her my bed.

To gild her worth I asked no wealthy dower,  
My toil could feed her, and my arm defend;  
I envied no man's riches, no man's power,  
I asked of none to give, of none to lend.

And she, the faithful partner of my care,  
When ruddy evening streaked the western sky,  
Looked towards the uplands if her mate was there,  
Or through the beeches cast an anxious eye—

While I, contented with my homely cheer,  
Saw round my knees our prattling children play,  
And oft with pleased attention sat to hear,  
The little history of their idle day.

After depicting famine caused in a land of plenty by the corn being taken to other lands, and praying Chatham to prevent this—

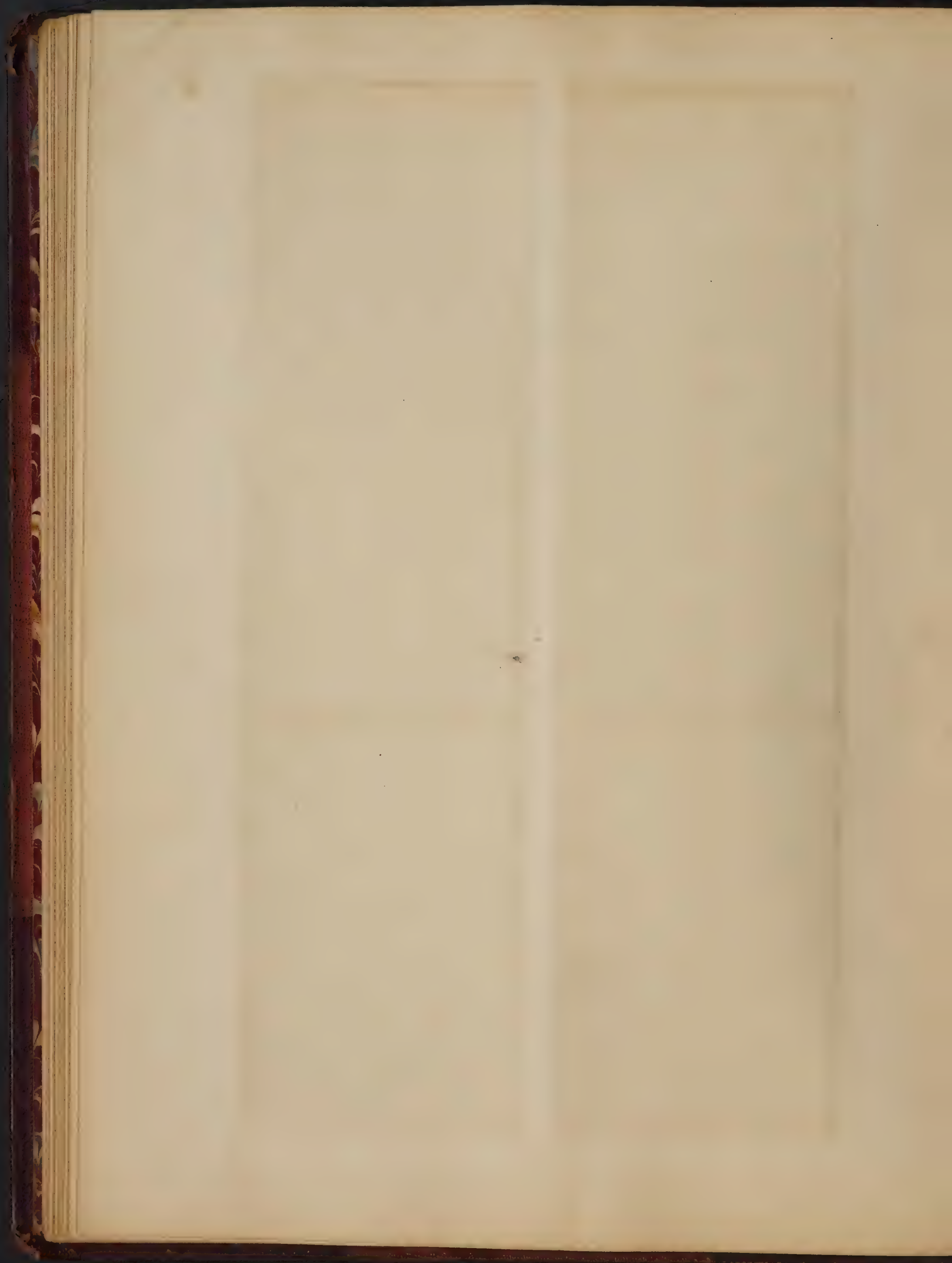
"If still the gripping cormorants withhold  
The fruits which rain and genial seasons send."

He concludes in the twenty-third verse with—

Then joy to thee, and to thy children peace,  
The grateful hind shall drink from plenty's horn;  
And while they share the cultured land's increase,  
The poor shall bless the day when Pitt was born.

I think the sentiment expressed in this poem is an improvement on the other. ROBT. BURNS.  
Or take a single verse of another poem addressed to







Mr John Lapraik—

Eternal mind, who ruled the fates  
Of dying realms and rising states  
With one unchanged decree;  
While we admire thy vast affairs,  
Say, can our little trifling cares  
Afford a smile to thee?

Or other two verses from a poem written after hearing  
a sermon preached in Tarbolton Church:—

The sophist spins his subtle thread  
On liberty and fate,  
With heart depraved and puzzled head  
Prolongs the dull debate;  
Till Virtue, Truth, his Saviour and his God,  
By Metaphysics mighty lore,  
At once lose all their essence, all their power,  
Charmed to eternal sleep by that Magician's rod.

And concludes in the seventh verse:—

Proceed, my friend, so shalt thou find  
In these dark paths thy God;  
His works, His word, with steady mind,  
From stern oppression's rod,  
From quibbling words, from lying lips retrieve;  
And whilst thou talk'st of ancient days,  
Erect memorials to Jehovah's praise,  
Till sceptics cease to doubt and infidels believe,

The original MSS., as I stated formerly, can all be seen at my address. And now I leave this with your readers, convinced that after reading these lines it will be difficult to convince them that such are other than the genuine productions of our national poet, and that no amount of anonymous fiction will do more than show that they can stand the test, and, in this case, may have been the means of increasing their knowledge of the poet's works, and that much is still to be told.—I remain, &c.,

JAMES MACKENZIE, F.S.A., Scot.

(From the *Cummock Express*, October 21.)

BURNS MANUSCRIPT AND JAMES MACKENZIE, ESQ.

19 George Street, Edinburgh.

SIR,—My attention has been drawn to this correspondence. Mr Mackenzie is known here as a high-class Amateur Manuscript Collector, and he would never keep a doubtful manuscript. I have carefully examined his Burns Manuscript—paper, writing, and subject—and it has left no doubt in my mind but that it is a genuine document. Your correspondent has written a novel criticism upon an unseen document. It should not have appeared, as doing no good, and as being rather uncharitable.—Yours truly,

JAMES STILLIE.

[Mr Stillie, we may add, is not only the oldest and one of the most highly respected booksellers in Edinburgh, but has for many years been himself a collector of Burns' manuscripts, and having, perhaps, passed more of these through his hands than any other man, his testimony to the genuineness of those in Mr Mackenzie's possession is of the greatest weight. Nor need it seem strange that such manuscripts do exist, for does any person suppose that Robert Burns wrote no more letters than the few hundreds of published ones which have been given to the world?—Ed. *Cummock Express*.]

(From the *Cummock Express*, October 28.)

SIR,—I have just seen the letter which Mr James Stillie, the well-known Edinburgh bookseller, has addressed to you anent the Burns MSS. correspondence and Mr Mackenzie, and should like to say a few words in reference to it. Mr Stillie says "your correspondent has written a novel criticism upon an unseen document." Let Mr Stillie read the correspondence again, and in its entirety, and he will see that the grave doubts expressed by your nameless correspondent are, so far, chiefly based on the style and composition of the MS. Mr James Mackenzie may be known to Mr James Stillie as a "high-class amateur MSS. collector." I do not question it; but it does not appear to be disputed that his name is associated with the sale of the "Rillbank Crescent Letters." I again challenge him to send his "John Hill letter" to the British Museum authorities for their opinion as to its authenticity, or, if he prefers it, to the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, which, I may remind him, is but a stone's throw from his address in Forrest Road; and if the judgment of either authority does not confirm the strong opinion, amounting to conviction, held by the nameless correspondent referred to, myself, and many others, that the MS. in question must be classed with the "Rillbank Crescent Letters" as spurious, I will give to the Kilmarnock Federation of Burns Club the sum of £5 (five pounds.) It would appear from the correspondence that this is the third time Mr Mackenzie has been so challenged. When I made such a proposal to him personally he pooh-poohed it, alleging that the opinion of the British Museum was "laughed at in Edinburgh," but I can assure him that whatever view it pleases him to take on the subject, such opinion has weight with the great majority of private collectors, and that a public service would be rendered by obtaining it on the John

Hill letter, ere it finds its way to the mart. Surely it will be open to comment if a collector who, as Mr Stillie says, "would never keep a doubtful MS.," does not, by accepting my offer at once, satisfy the doubts cast on that in question, and benefit the Federation, in which, having regard to its objects, he cannot fail to be interested? Much as I venerate age and good repute, I cannot accept Mr Stillie's opinion as conclusive; nor is it the first time that I have ventured to be at variance with him on the authenticity of Burns MSS., as correspondence in my possession shows.

H. D. COLVILL-SCOTT.

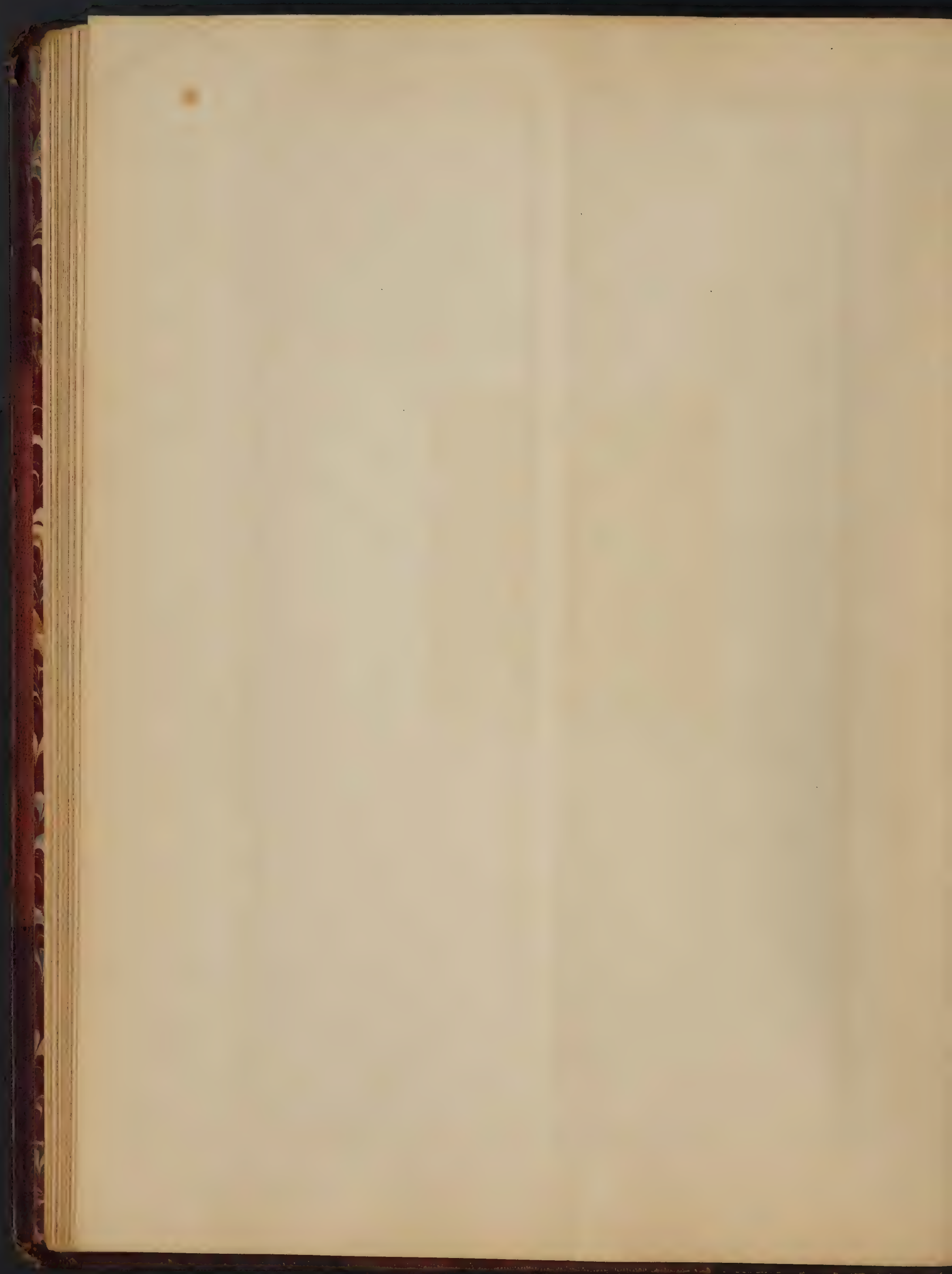
The Mount, Brookwood, Surrey.

(From the *Cummock Express*, November 4.)

SIR,—The letter which appeared in your last issue from Mr H. D. Colvill-Scott, replying to a letter in the previous week from Mr Stillie, Edinburgh, calls for some remark, although it is almost useless to continue the controversy over a letter of Burns which in an innocent moment I sent you, a copy of which appeared in your paper. This letter, I thought, might possess some interest, seeing it was addressed by the poet to one who was then in Cummock. This correspondence has been continued so long that it must be tiresome to your readers, and only delightful to Mr Scott himself. The letter in question was at first, according to him, bad at every point; now it has come down to be "chiefly based on the style and composition." Could Mr Scott, or any one else, find evidence that would tend to show that Burns was obliged to some one for his "style and composition," or would he have some to believe that in this particular Burns was uniform, a moment's reflection would be enough to prove that in this also he was as varied as in his moods, feelings, and fancies. No, no; the case rests on this—Mr Scott was one of those who condemned the letter before he had seen it. He came to see, and asked to see it. I showed him a number of Burns MSS., and the Hill letter also; so he must condemn it still. Mr Stillie (unknown to me) sent you the letter in which he gives his unqualified testimony as to the letter in question being genuine in every particular. Need it be wondered, then, that Mr Scott returns to the fight, and has his fling all round. And to show how good a fellow he is, and generous too, offers to give £5 to the Kilmarnock Federation of Burns Club if I will accept his challenge and send this letter to what he styles "The British Museum Authorities(?) for their opinion as to its authenticity," or the Advocates' Library, if they do not confirm his strong opinion, when he knows very well I refused to do so already. If the said Federation is in want of funds, why does he not send on his £5 note without this cheap way of appearing generous? To send such MS. for judgment to quarters, when most likely were they asked to read some of Burns' poems printed aloud to a Scottish audience, and this done, the fun thus produced would show if such a tribunal was a suitable one to test his MSS. Let me say again, I have submitted "the Hill letter" to many, and all declared it to be perfectly genuine; and I also am quite satisfied it is so, and only Mr Scott (and possibly his friend whom he brought with him to see it) are not. Why cannot he let it rest there? His contemptible insinuation about "Rillbank Crescent Letters" I pass, save to say that all MSS. there are perfectly genuine. And if it be that through me some manuscript were sent and made part of a sale, on one occasion, such as I knew about, were also perfectly genuine, that they were not warranted, was for a purpose, which proved that some who pretend to be judges of such were not so, and that it was but another instance of the old story, when the newly-coined sovereign pieces, direct from the Mint, were offered for fourteen shillings and sixpence on London Bridge, only a very few were disposed of during a whole day.

I leave your readers, who may care to give this correspondence a thought, to judge whether the opinion of one like our venerable friend Mr Stillie, an Ayrshire man by birth, or that of your young correspondent Mr Scott, dating from Surrey, are likely to be nearest the truth. The former was a judge of Burns MS., very likely, before Mr Scott's father was born. I regret that from the other side there is a decided tone of vindictiveness shown. For my part, it does not signify. But no doubt that when any one discovers they have unpublished Burns MS. they may think twice before sending such to the newspapers to be pounced upon by men of the Colvill-Scott order. By the way, during this correspondence much has been noted about spurious Burns MS. I had all along stated that I had failed to discover any of these. But our friend Mr Scott produced quite a number of very suspicious looking specimens of such. When he called on me—and it forms a curious coincidence that







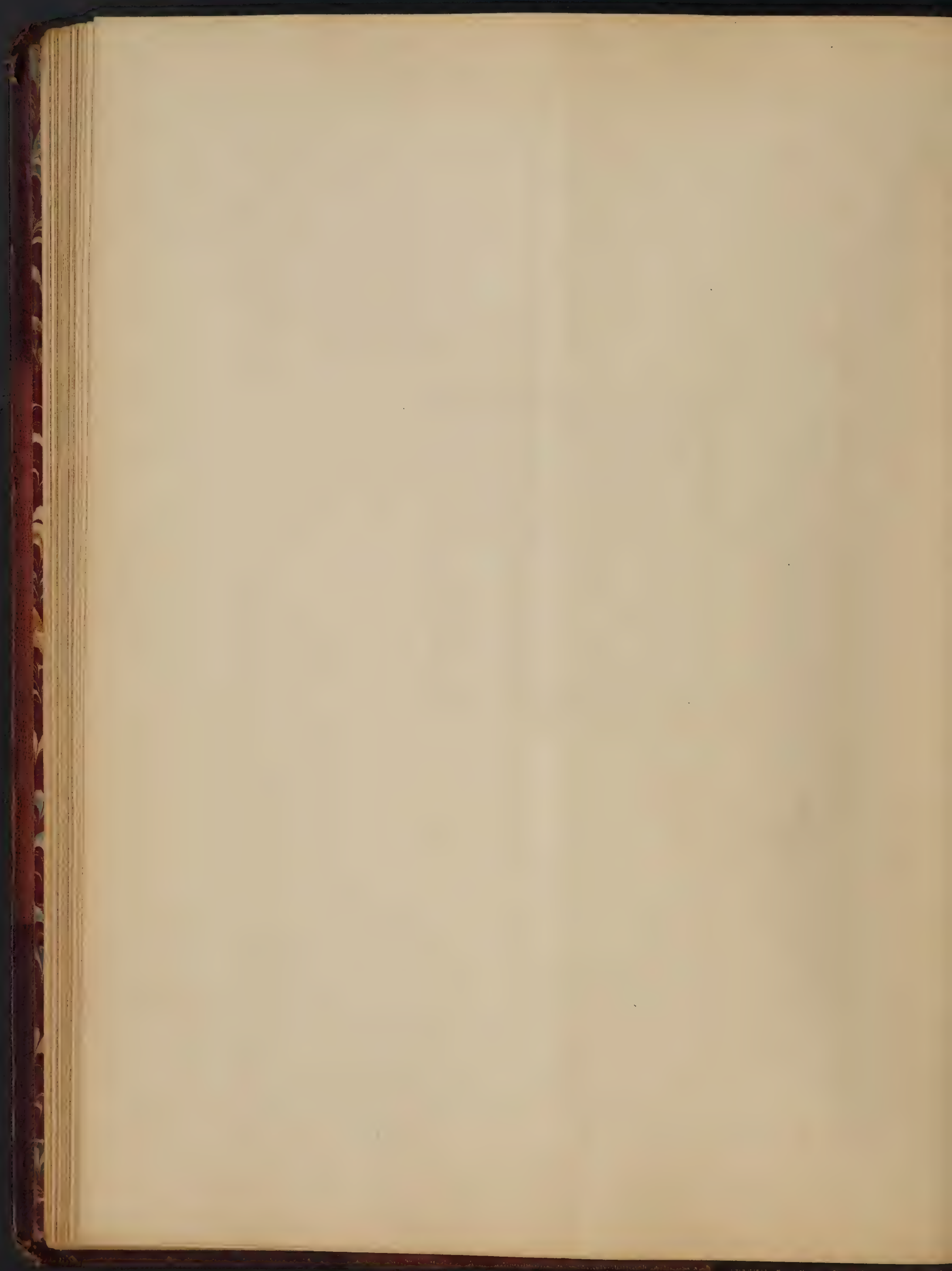
the one to cry out the most about *spurious Burns MS.* knew so very much about them and was able to remove all my doubts as to their existence by producing them at will. In this he is quite beyond Mr Stillie and all those whom I have consulted. I may remark further, I do not in the least regret this correspondence, as it has brought under my notice some special specimens of the poet's MS. giving evidence beyond dispute of how much some of his MS. vary, particularly letters to his relatives and intimates, so unlike the carefully worded and written compositions to others—proving the necessity for the largest possible experience in all kinds of his writings before setting up for a judge of such, as were any one to take *one* of his MS. and make it the standard by which all his others are to be tested he may readily fall into a mistake.

And now, in conclusion, I have to apologise for the length of this letter; but it must conclude my part of this correspondence, and all the statements of Mr Scott or any one else will not alter the facts of the case. I trust that you will not permit advantage to be taken of this by statements to which no reply will be given, and if this concludes the matter my friends had the first of it and I will be entitled to the last.—  
Yours, &c. JAMES MACKENZIE, F.S.A. Scot.

31st October 1892.

[“This correspondence is now closed,” remarked the Ayrshire editor just at the stage when it became interesting.]







ALLEGED FICTITIOUS SCOTT AND BURNS MANUSCRIPTS.  
REMARKABLE STATEMENTS.

The *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* devotes considerable space to what it calls a question of national, even international, importance, one which has long excited much interest and anxiety in a certain section of the literary world—namely, the authenticity of a mass of old manuscripts, chiefly purporting to be relics of Burns, Scott, and the Jacobite times, which has within the last few years been placed upon the market with amazing prodigality.

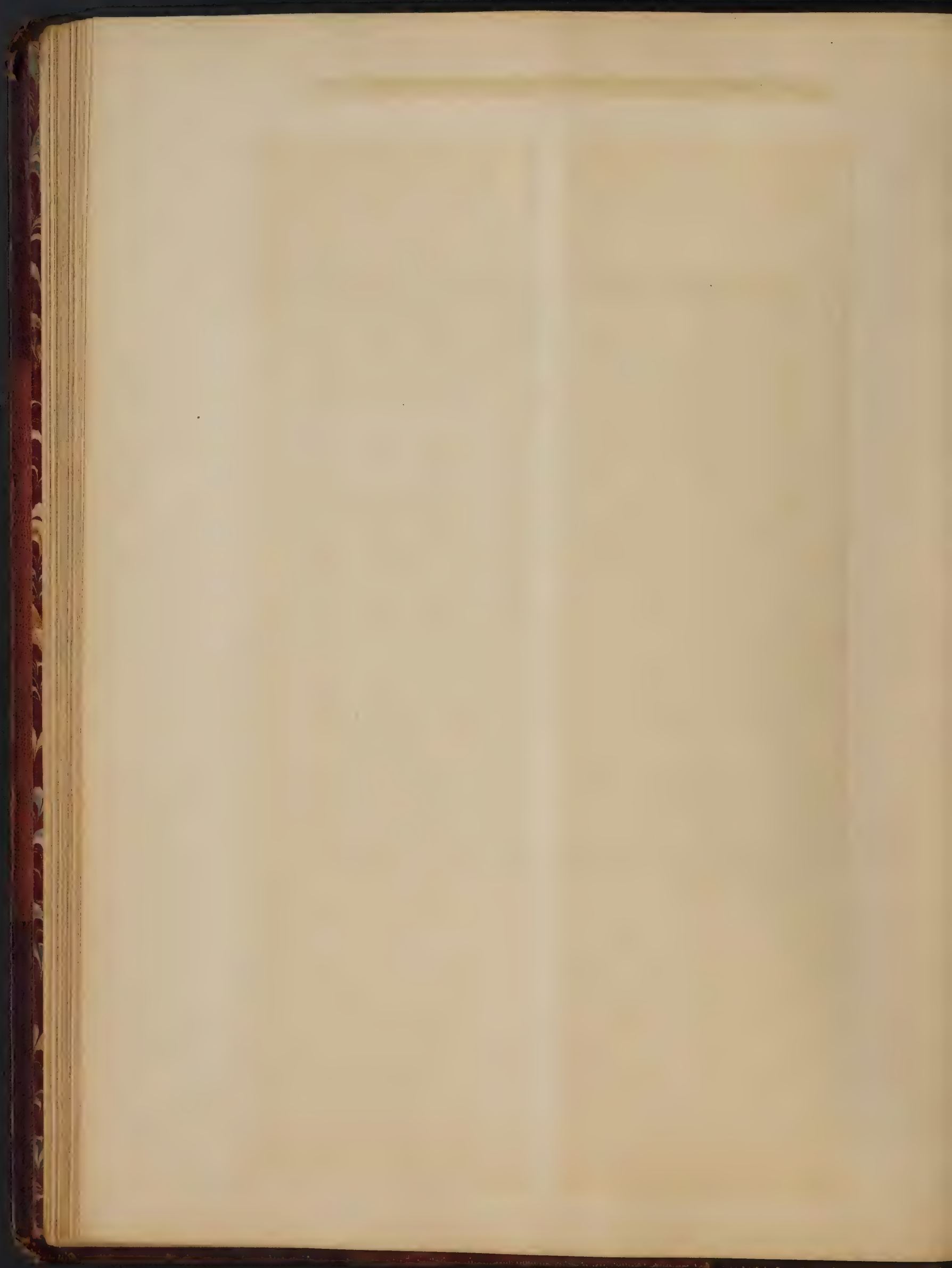
These forgeries, which (says the *Dispatch*) are said to be manufactured in Edinburgh, carry upon them such marks of genuineness as to have deceived many 'cute collectors; they are executed with a skill compared with which the forgeries of Chatterton and Ireland were but infants' efforts; they have been sold at public auctions and by the hands of book-sellers, to collectors of experience and rank—a well-known nobleman in the neighbourhood being included in the number of the dupes—and the imposition has extended to books purporting to bear the signature of Robert Burns.

There are many new Burns manuscripts in the market about the genuineness of which grave doubts must be expressed, and these doubts are not confined, we regret to say, to letters and poems of the national bard, but may be extended to other documents, such as rebellion or Jacobite papers, Solemn Leagues and Covenants, and letters of Sir Walter Scott. In May, 1891, there was brought to the hammer in Edinburgh a collection of manuscripts formed by a gentleman, who stated that he had had the items in his possession for twenty-five years, but forgot to add the source of his acquisitions. Strong disbelief was cast upon the authenticity of the documents exposed for sale, and the prices fetched for the manuscripts were in fair keeping with the disbelief, five letters by Burns—one of them with a poem—bringing only prices between one and two guineas, a song in the handwriting of the poet realizing but 30s., and a discharge for £3, granted and signed by Burns, changing hands for the ridiculous sum of 32s. The prices were quite sufficient to prove the worthlessness of the lots. Since that time the same person has been offering for sale to numerous collectors similar manuscripts, frequently with—more frequently without—the success which he anticipated.

The editor of the *Dispatch* is now devoting himself to an exhaustive inquiry on the whole subject.

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## THE GREAT MSS. FORGERIES.

ALTHOUGH, as we have stated, Mr Mackenzie has satisfied himself with regard to the genuineness of certain of his manuscripts on an examination by certain nameless persons, this will not satisfy those who hold the belief that they are not genuine. The body of gentlemen in whom he had complete confidence may or may not have included Mr Stillie (the value of whose opinion is not rated by others so high as it is put by Mr Mackenzie), and also the descendant of the poet referred to in one of Mr Mackenzie's letters. What *his* verdict is worth may be illustrated by the case of the volume of letters by Schiller announced as forthcoming some years ago, a preliminary certificate having been obtained from his last surviving daughter. Before they left the press, they were clearly shown to be spurious.

Only one or other of two courses will be accepted as completely satisfactory—to submit the documents to the head officials of the Manuscript Department in the British Museum, or for Mr Mackenzie to name the sources of his acquisitions, which must surely have some sort of history attached to them.

The British Museum, it may be recollected, did much to bring the notorious M. Simonides to book when he was duping collectors with his sham antique manuscripts. He tried the Trustees on with a false memorandum addressed by Belisarius to Justinian—(Simonides aimed only at big game)—but the imposition was at once detected. Had Ismail Pasha asked their opinion of the forged MS. of Aristotle which he purchased from Simonides, and had the wealthy English peer submitted to their notice the two spurious letters of Alcibiades to Pericles sold to him by the wily forger, they would have saved the large sums paid for the fraudulent apocrypha. If we are not mistaken it was through the British Museum that Simonides was detected when he tried to persuade scholars that a manuscript of Homer, written on lotus leaves, was a genuine codex of very early date. This "genuine old manuscript" turned out to be a "faithful copy of the text of Homer as published by the German critic Wolff, and the manuscript reproduced the whole of the printer's errors in that edition."

There is another test which may be new to Mr Mackenzie—the analysis of the ink with which the documents are written. The constituents of ink used by Burns and Scott were very different from those of ink in use at the present day, and an analytical chemist would soon make short work of the matter.

It is, of course, quite within the right of Mr Mackenzie to shut himself up in his shell, and declare that his collection is his own, and that the manuscripts, which have lain in his possession, it is said, for so many years unknown to the kith, kin, and fellow-countrymen of Burns and Scott, are matters which concern nobody. He is entitled, we say, to take up this high position, but it is an unwise one. He has pressed himself upon the public as a great collector, and some prominent documents in his possession have been pronounced to be spurious by authorities whom we believe to be the first beyond all doubt in the land. Simultaneously with this fact comes the knowledge that a wholesale manuscript factory exists in our midst. How do you know that? it may be said. Enough in the meantime that we do know it, that scores of men in Edinburgh know it—and if Mr Mackenzie does not know it, then is he a simpler gentleman than even we gave him credit for. We firmly believe that were Mr Mackenzie to come forward at this juncture with the history of certain documents, so far as he knows it, it would be possible to trace their origin to its original source. We looked for help from Mr Mackenzie, for did he not promise in the Cummoock correspondence that "it was most desirable to have any attempt at forgery

exposed"? We have been disappointed. Fortunately, however, the thing may be done even without Mr Mackenzie, though not so well or so speedily done.

We shall begin to-morrow to prove the existence and the audacious character of the forgeries.

### INTERESTING TESTIMONY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

SIR,—You have done well in laying bare the facts as to the systematic attempt that has for some time past been made to foist upon the public spurious imitations of the caligraphy of our leading literary men. It is nothing short of a public scandal that, with so much suspicion existing on the subject, the evil has been allowed to continue so long; and your courage in taking up the question with so much vigour deserves public gratitude.

The modern craze for autographs of poets and authors is akin to the Middle-Age veneration which pious people then had to collect relics of saints—an arm bone, a tooth, or it may be a nail of the great toe of some worthy father of the Church. The modern craze, if somewhat similar, has more perhaps of a unique interest attaching to it. The autographs of literary and historic personages throw us back into the writer's world, and enable us to realise that he was a living man like ourselves. But once shake our faith in their genuineness, and their value vanishes. A make-believe can never take the place of the real article. An imitation chair said to belong to Queen Mary may be useful as a chair, though it be a forgery; but a letter forged to represent the writing of a Scott or Burns is a worthless impertinence.

Like you, Sir, I have been long scandalised to know that a systematic manufacture of such documents has been in existence, and that a regular trade is being carried on whereby worthless documents are bought by and sold to wealthy admirers at extravagant prices.

Some time ago I had occasion to make inquiries as to some of these, and was astonished to find among those engaged in the trade a wide-spread knowledge that such a state of things existed. Yet apparently they have done nothing to detect the perpetrators and put a stop to the practice, even with the conviction in their own minds, as one bookseller said, that the existence of so many spurious papers "is apt to make people indifferent as to buying."

On my asking one of our leading dealers, "Are there any forged documents being sold?" I got the immediate reply—"Dozens of them. I had, a parcel of MSS. sent me some four or five months ago, which I returned. All were forged except one. The firm from whom they came acknowledged afterwards I was right."

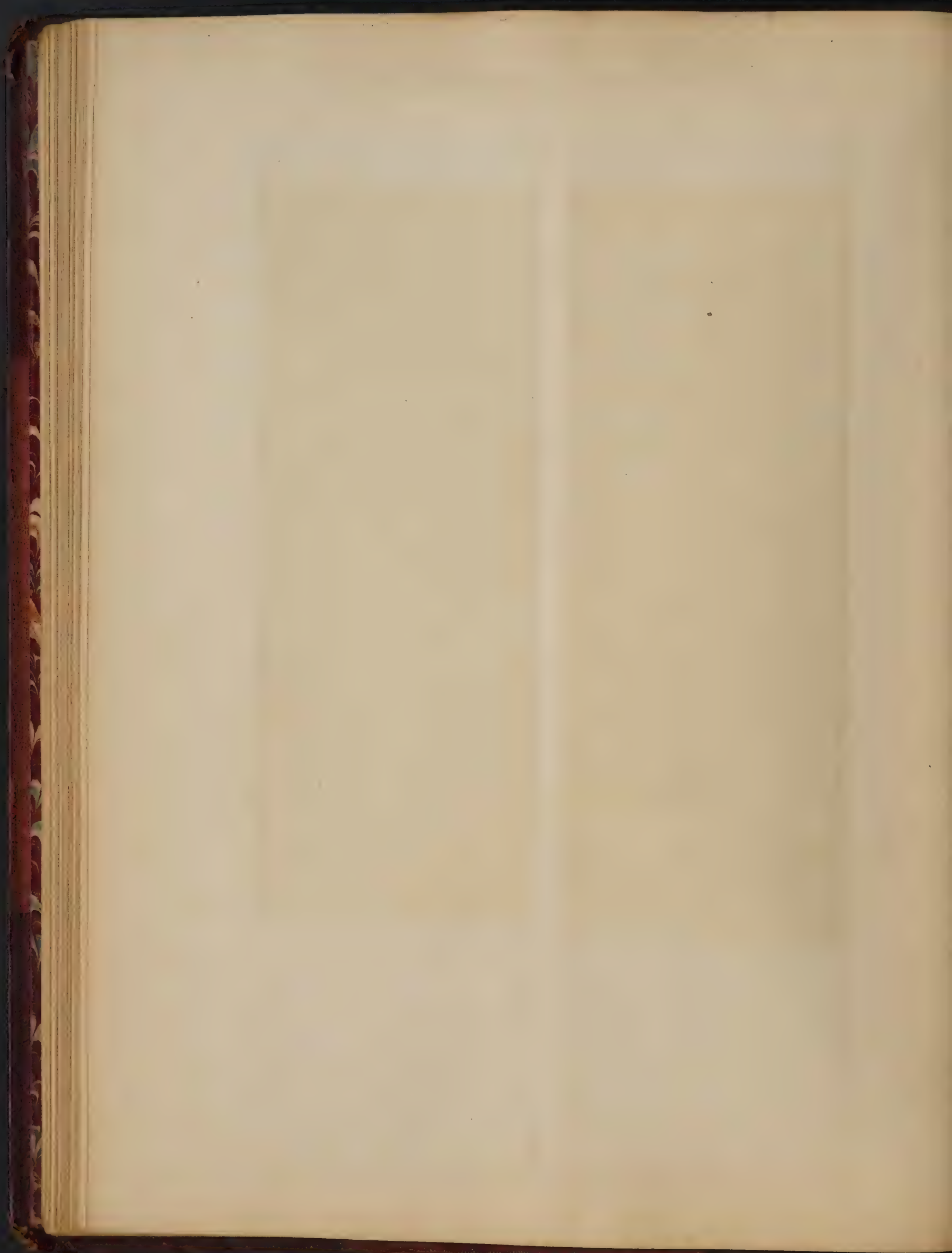
To my inquiry, "How do you detect a forged MS.?" "Very easily," he said. "I have had too long practice to be easily deceived."

"I suppose," said I, "the difficulty will be in getting the paper suitable for the purpose?"

"Well," was the reply, "I detected forgery by its paper lately. A document bearing to be written by Sir Walter Scott in large folio paper; the edges were much frayed and crumpled, and it had been folded up and kept in the pocket till the folds were well worn, but I found at one side the marks of stitching, showing that it had been torn for the purpose from a book; in all likelihood it had been the fly-leaf of the book."

It is an undoubted fact that many innocent persons have been duped, and are in the possession of what they believe to be genuine documents. It is contrary to human nature to admit having been "taken in," and when once people have acquired what they consider to be literary treasures at perhaps a considerable sum, it goes rather against the grain that they should have to admit they have only got a piece of waste-paper. Still, in the interest of truth, every such document should be put to the severest test. It is a remarkable fact that out of five or six dealers—all thoroughly respectable men—with whom I conversed on the subject, not one would admit he had any forged documents in his possession. And yet, in face of this, a friend of mine in charge of one of our principal libraries had two batches offered him, which, on







examination, he declared to be forgeries. He declined to buy, but they appeared shortly afterwards at a public sale, and one of the lots was purchased by one of these same dealers, who actually came to my friend afterwards, wanting him to withdraw, but he adhered to his opinion.

One gentleman with characteristic honesty told me he had purchased at a sale of a Equitable Loan Company's pledges a number of autographs, a large number of which he had found to be forged, and did not intend to sell, though he had lost a good deal of money by the transaction.

All are not so honourable as this dealer, however. One gentleman mentioned that he had sunk a small fortune in rare MSS., and is it to be wondered at if, having done so, he should be unwilling to admit any of them to be worthless?

Your statements in regard to Mr James Mackenzie's connection with the "John Hill" letter and poems by Burns are certainly very extraordinary, and exhibit that gentleman either as the victim of a downright fraud or the fortunate possessor of some very valuable documents hitherto unknown to exist. Surely when a man comes into possession of such a rarity as a parchment copy of the "Solemn League and Covenant," it is a matter of interest to the whole literary world to know where it has been lying for the past two hundred years. It is bound to have a history, and if Mr James Mackenzie, F.S.A. & Scot., is in possession of its history, here is a glorious opportunity of making himself famous. No feeling of modesty, however admirable it may be in most men, should deter him from at once making its story public. It may be no matter of ours to pry into his private affairs, but here is a national document of great importance, of which nobody but Mr Mackenzie knows anything; the public have a right to know something more about it than he has yet chosen to disclose. If it is a forgery, in the cause of truth let it be known. If, as is to be feared, this is only a Solemn League to palm a spurious document upon us by some persons who have deceived Mr Mackenzie, the sooner such audacious attempts are frustrated the better for all concerned. Under such forgeries the character of none of our literary celebrities will be safe. Better to admit their worthlessness and assist in tracking the forger.

This is how a friend of mine came into possession of an album with a collection of autographs said to be those of Scott, Hogg, Admiral Cochrane, and others. He was in a bookseller's shop looking over his stock one day, when the shopman put it into his hand, saying he could have it a bargain; that a man had called with it, and, being very ill off, was willing to sell it for a guinea. He had offered it to one bookseller, whom I could name, for £4, and others for smaller sums, till, having failed to sell it, he left it at this shop on the chance of getting £1, 1s.

We have reason to believe that this same bookseller had already on hand a large stock of autographs acquired from the same source.—I am, &c.

F.S.A.

#### THE MSS. POEMS.

26 South Castle Street, Edinburgh,

November 24, 1892.

SIR,—I am not an expert in handwritings or in old MSS., but I have read, and lovingly read, the songs and poems of Burns these many years; and if the

inept and inconsequent "Poor Man's Prayer" or the laboriously feeble verses to a "Rosebud" are works by Burns, then I will gladly subscribe a guinea and more to have them burned. At a first glance these verses appear to be the work of some east country literary aspirant, and they are flattering to Burns only in the sense that "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery." Will "Hugh Haliburton" favour us with his views on the dialect employed in the Mackenzie MSS.? Neither the actual words used, nor the "sowth" of the rhymes, nor the repeated intellectual and literary incoherencies in these verses bear any resemblance to the style of Burns as I have hitherto met it.

Whether the MSS. be genuine or non-genuine, Mr Mackenzie will do a kindness to the reputation of the poet by destroying them.—I am, &c.

P. M'OMISH DOTT.

November 23, 1892.

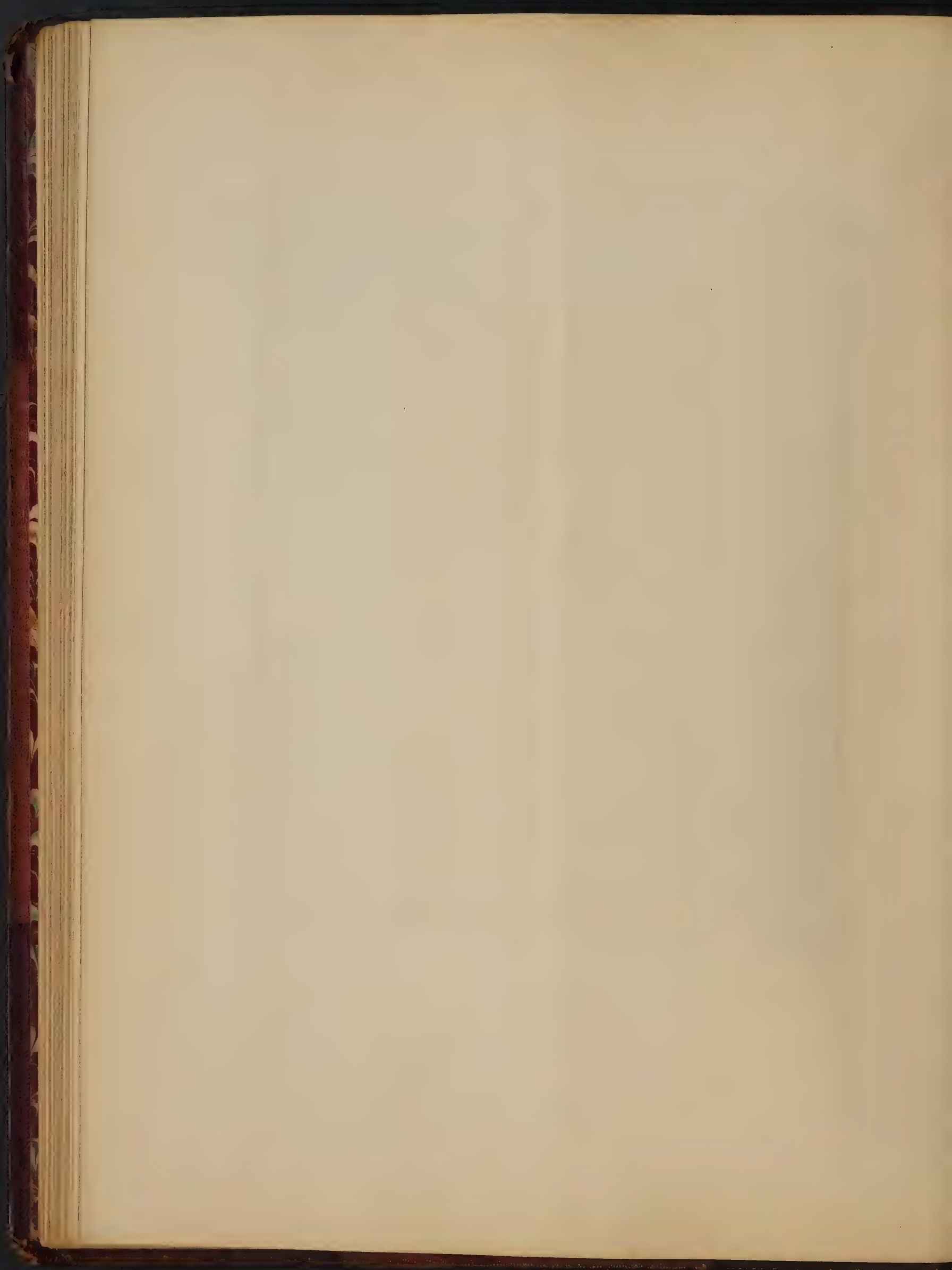
SIR,—I have read with much interest your remarks and the papers on this subject in your issue of yesterday. Some four or five years ago I had submitted to me with a view to purchase, by two separate persons, within a few weeks of each other, supposed genuine letters of Burns. Having a somewhat special acquaintance with Burns' handwriting from having seen many undoubted specimens of it, I very carefully examined the two letters brought to me, and though indeed they were remarkably skilful imitations I had not a great deal of trouble in determining that they were spurious, and I returned them to their respective owners with an unqualified expression of my opinion. Who those people were, or where they got their supposed treasures, I did not ask and do not know. But that there has been and probably still is a Burns Factory is I fear beyond doubt.—I am, &c.

R. S., F.S.A. (Scot.)

#### A LONDON VIEW.

To-day's *Daily Telegraph* says:—"Punishment sufficiently severe for the Scotsman who would forge letters and poems by Scott and Burns, and 'place them on the market' in order to beguile the inexperienced collector, could hardly be either imagined or invented. Hurling him from the top of the Castle Rock at Edinburgh would be far too mild for the offence; while perpetual banishment to England would, we fear, be regarded as a blessing in disguise. That these nefarious practices have been extensively indulged in is stated by a discreet Scottish contemporary, which gives chapter and verse for its assertions. Letters of Sir Walter, autographs of Burns, Jacobite League and Covenant, 'all spurious,' are said to have been successfully palmed off on unsuspecting buyers for some time past. The forgeries, moreover, are reported to be executed with so high a degree of skill that compared with them 'those of Chatterton and Ireland were but infants' efforts.' This is praise indeed, and it is only to be regretted that such executive ability is not expended on a better cause. It will perhaps bring a blush to the cheek of the London Scot to hear that the chief seat of this unpatriotic manufacture is said to be Edinburgh."

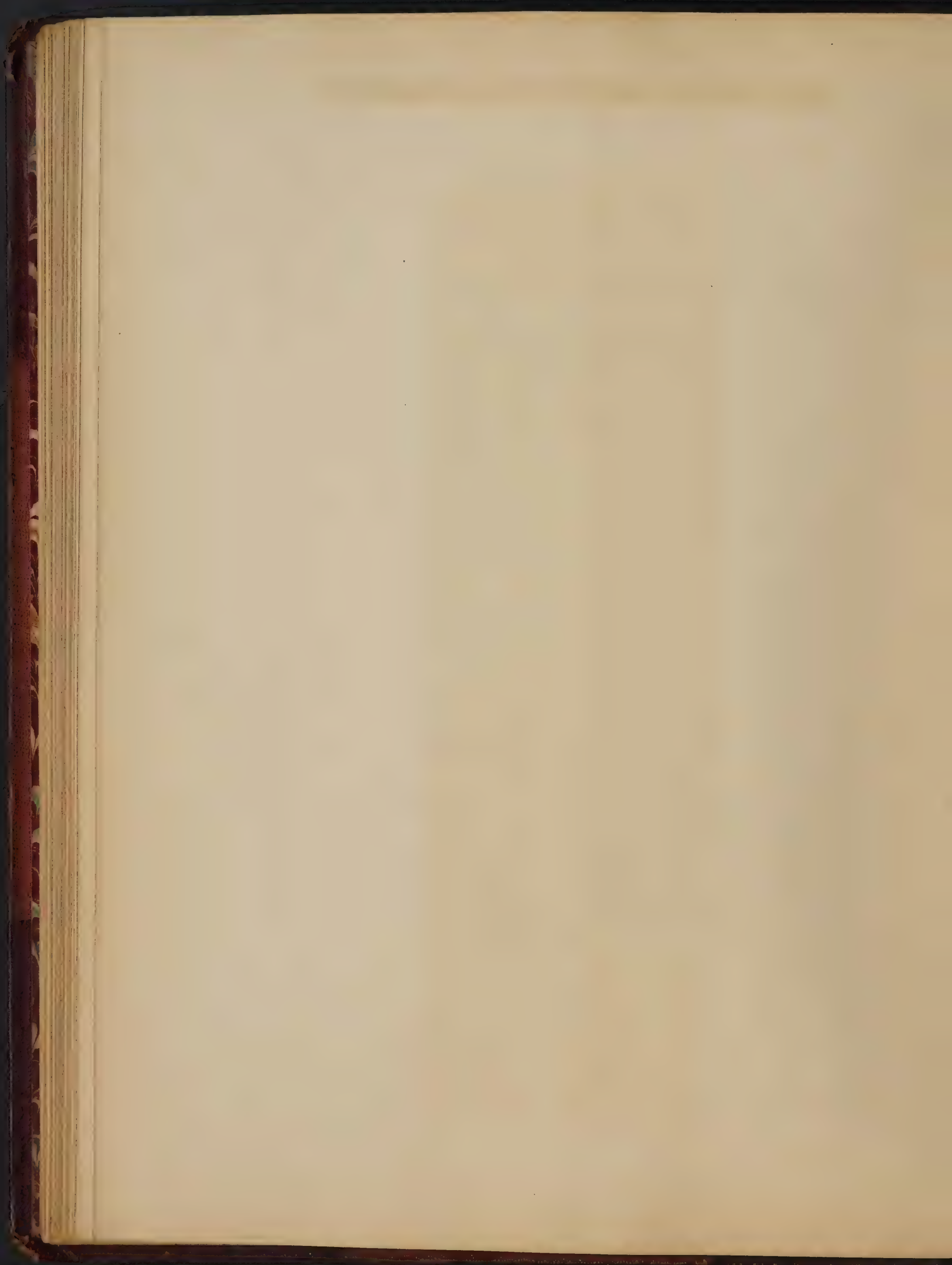






PUNISHMENT sufficiently severe for the Scotsman who would forge letters and poems by SCOTT and BURNS, and "place them on the market" in order to beguile the inexperienced collector, could hardly be either imagined or invented. Hurling him from the top of the Castle Rock at Edinburgh would be far too mild for the offence, while perpetual banishment to England would, we fear, be regarded as a blessing in disguise. That these nefarious practices have been extensively indulged in is stated by a discreet Scottish contemporary, which gives chapter and verse for its assertions. Letters of Sir WALTER, autographs of BURNS, Jacobite papers, and even copies of the "Solemn League and Covenant," all spurious, are said to have been successfully palmed off on unsuspecting buyers for some time past. The forgeries, moreover, are reported to be executed with so high a degree of skill that, compared with them, "those of CHATTERTON and IRELAND were but infants' efforts." This is praise indeed, and it is only to be regretted that such executive ability is not expended on a better cause. It will perhaps bring a blush to the cheek of the London Scot to hear that the chief seat of this unpatriotic manufacture is said to be Edinburgh. That Auld Reekie itself should be guilty of faithlessness to the deathless memories of the "inspired ploughman" and the "Wizard of the North"! And what would "douce DAVIE DEANS" say to a compatriot profane enough to make a living out of sham "Leagues and Covenants"? It might have been thought that Scotland had had quite enough of literary fabrications in the ingenious "translations" of JAMES MACPHERSON. These, at least, were in some degree excusable, as, according to the view of many critics, it could be said of OSSIAN as of Mrs. HARRIS, that "there was no such a person." It is a very different thing when the names of actual historical personages are taken in vain and appended to writings which they never wrote.







## THE GREAT FORGERIES OF OLD MSS.

### THE METHODS OF THE FORGER.

WE give to-day the first instalment—and only an instalment—of our proof of the existence of a Manuscript Factory in Edinburgh. We select one bundle of the numerous bundles, out of which new-fangled “collections” are made, and show the glaring character of the fraud. The forger was in the habit of disposing of his wares in different ways—by submitting them either personally or by deputy (for there was more than one in the business) — or by letter; by selling to booksellers of weaker judgment than their fellows, or leaving specimens or books for sale with those booksellers; by forwarding to auction rooms, and—when apparently the forger or forgers were pecuniarily pressed—by pawning. We select a pawning case to-day. Needless to say, we have many cases and indisputable proofs, and the amazing thing is that such an infamous and gigantic fraud could have gone on so long without some more vigorous action being taken to expose it.

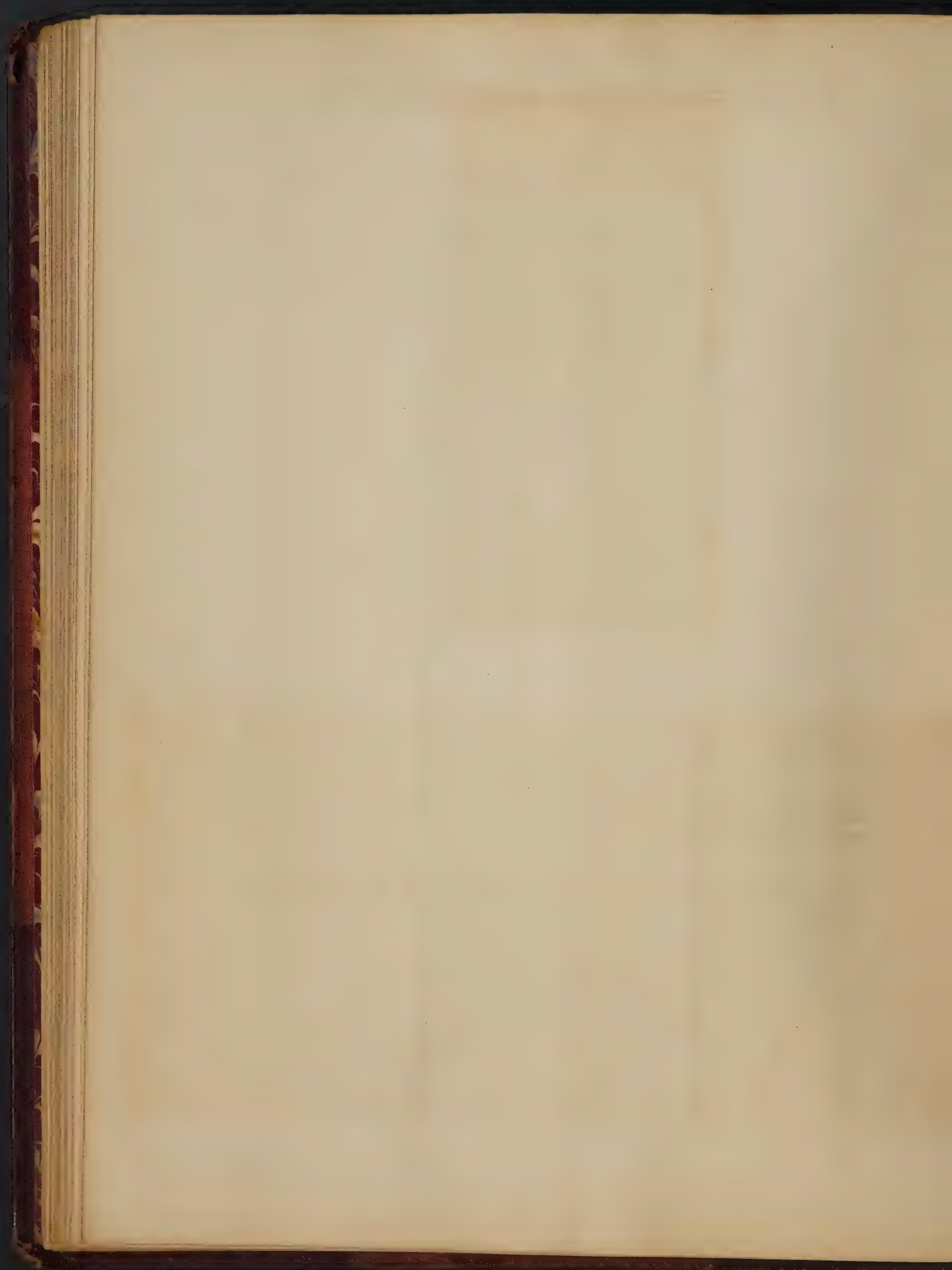
We take to-day a pawning case, for the facts relating to which we are indebted to a prominent citizen, who at once came forward and placed every information he possessed at our service, and we only regret that the condition imposed prevents our acknowledging conduct which deserves the gratitude of every honourable Scotsman. In the ordinary course of business this gentleman, or one of his assistants, bought at one of the sales frequently held by one of the chief pawnbroking firms a batch of old and very carefully-arranged and docketed MSS. They had every appearance of genuineness on the face of them, but a little closer inspection disclosed to the practised eye of the expert in question evident marks of forgery, and his suspicion was converted into absolute certainty by the discovery that the impudent representations of the forger to the effect that certain documents had been marked “sold at the Whiteford Mackenzie sale (£5, 16s.),” and so forth (this being a noted library sale in Edinburgh a few years ago), were unfounded, and that such documents had never passed through that sale, the forger having simply transferred the library “bookplate” or monogram or stamp (a sketch of which we give) to his fraudulent paper. The details we give more fully below. This batch, it may be added, is only one of many known to exist.

We need say no more to-day than thank the gentlemen who from various quarters send us encouragement and offers of assistance; to those persons who only send abuse we may say that their indignation is wasted.

### A DARING CASE OF FRAUD.

ONE of our reporters, in making inquiries regarding the spurious documents about which so much has been heard, lighted upon a parcel of them in the hands of a gentleman in the book trade, who had a curious story to tell regarding them. The gentleman in question is one of the most estimable of our Edinburgh citizens, and is held in as high regard personally as he is esteemed for business probity. He has kindly put several of the MSS. and their docketing covers into our hands for use in this inquiry, and, as will be seen below, we give photographic reproductions of one or two of them, which those who are following this discussion will view with much interest. Those who hold any MSS. with docketing covers in the same handwriting as that which we reproduce would do well to make inquiry regarding their genuineness.







The MSS. in question, along with others of the same category, had been pawned in a loan office in the city and had not been redeemed. In course of time the pledges lapsed, and were exposed somewhere about two years ago at one of the quarterly sales which are held for the disposal of such goods. The MSS. were duly catalogued, and included autograph documents of the most diverse description. Burns MSS., Scott MSS.; MSS. relating to the Jacobite period; letters by Oliver Cromwell, and other people more or less illustrious, whose writings are sought after by collectors.

The particular parcel in which we are at present interested was laid out in a glass case for inspection, and was seen before the sale by one of the chief assistants of the bookseller who has now put some of them at our disposal. There was then no whisper of forged manuscripts, or rather, it may be said, it had not reached the ear of the gentleman referred to. At the sale the MSS. were put up in ones and twos according to the interest (or supposed interest) attaching to them, and brought very good though not extravagantly high prices.

At the same sale there were a number of books also exposed of no intrinsic value in themselves, but with autographs which made them worthy of note by collectors. One had upon it a dedication by Scott to a friend, another the signature of Carlyle or of some other author, and so on. After the sale, when the MSS. were being looked over in the quietude of the back shop, it began to dawn upon the bookseller and his assistants that most of them were not genuine, and believing this they have never been shown or offered for sale to any one since.

In addition to the internal evidence which the MSS. presented as to their spurious character, the person who pawned them, whom for the present we may assume to be the writer of the dockets also, had afforded the purchaser of the MSS. collateral means of testing their genuineness. It may be explained to those who are not in the habit of seeing and handling old MSS. that when they are passing from hand to hand they are generally laid between two sheets of quarto or folio paper, as the case may be, and a description of the MS. within is written on the front outside page. Take the Burns MS. which we reproduce below. It was placed between two sheets of quarto paper, and the description on the outside of it was as follows:—

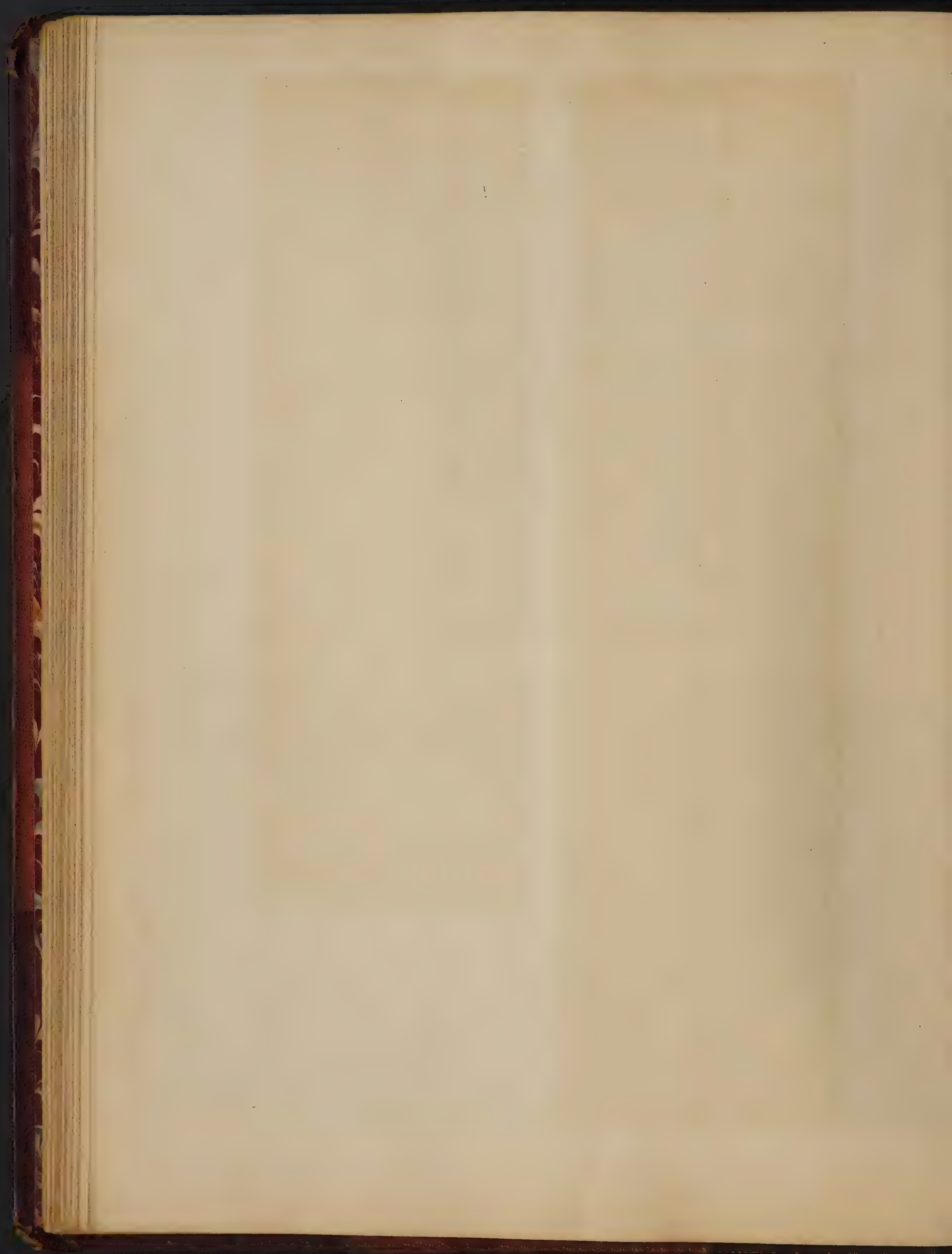
No 4 Burnsiana

Robert. Burns. Scottish Poet

Autograph Receipt for money to a Tavern Club  
at Dumfries. dated 1793

Whiteford Mackenzie Sale.  
£5. 6/-







We give at the same time the forged Burns document, about which we shall have something to say presently.

Let the reader turn his attention for the moment to the docket. We have shown it to several people, not experts, but possessed of ordinary intelligence, along with the pretended receipt by Burns and a Scott letter, which has been declared to be a forgery—(though we are sorry we have not been able to reproduce it to-day, but it may be done yet)—and they have unhesitatingly declared that the docket was the work of a man skilful with his pen, who had been in the habit of imitating the writing both of Burns and of Scott. The words "Robert Burns," it has been pointed out, have a curious generic resemblance to the signature of Burns; while several words of the docket, if they were written smaller, are not unlike the style of Scott. Take the word "money" for example in this connection, and compare it with the Scott caligraphy. If we could have given that letter of Scott of which we give the "envelope address" below, the resemblance between "money" and some of the words in the spurious document would have been very apparent.

But these are perhaps matters more for experts. Here is the damning fact which will be understood of all men, and which suffices at once to stamp the documents as impudent forgeries.

The docket says "Whitefoord Mackenzie sale £5, 16s." That, we take it, can only have one meaning. It was intended to suggest to the purchaser, who in this case was the pawnbroker, that the document in question had been sold at the Whitefoord Mackenzie sale for £5, 16s. We have reason to believe that the bookseller who bought the document took the trouble to verify this statement. What did he find? That the document was not sold at the Whitefoord Mackenzie sale for £5, 16s., or any other figure, and that it was not a Whitefoord Mackenzie document at all. But the "book-plate" upon it? Yes! the plate upon it is that which Mr Whitefoord Mackenzie put upon all his books. But at his sale there were, of course, a great many comparatively worthless books which were disposed of for a few shillings a-piece. Each of these had the official stamp upon it. As the Burns MSS. which we reproduce was not a Whitefoord Mackenzie document, it follows as a matter of course that the plate had been put upon it by the person who pawned it, with the intention of deceiving the pawnbroker, who, it may be supposed, was in the eyes of the forger likely to be taken in by a MS. with such a docket and such an imposing seal. So much for this precious "Burns" MS.

We have in our possession another "Burns letter" dated Ellisland, 19th January 1790, and addressed to Mr John Hamilton in Ayr. On the back it is sealed with red sealing wax, which holds a bit of paper on the upper side, as if it were part of the letter which had been torn off in the opening. Unfortunately the little bit of paper is considerably larger than the gap on the page from which it is pretended it has been torn, and does not, indeed, look like the same paper at all. In the body of the letter all the thick down-strokes have a most laboured look. The docket is as before, "Whitefoord Mackenzie sale, paid £4, 11s.," but it appears that, as in the other case, no such document was disposed of at that sale.

The letter we have selected from the Scott letters, it will also be seen, is docketed in the same handwriting as the docket of the Burns. It therefore came from the same person. This person who made up the bundle for the pawnbroker evidently knew what he was about. He had cut out two lines of print and stuck them on to the face of the cover, as if to show that the letter within was the one referred to in the print, and that 30s. had been paid for it. It does not explain where the 30s. was paid for it, or who gave 10s. for the two autographs (as a matter of fact there are three pretended autographs), so that this letter cannot be traced in the same way as the Burns receipts. The letter we may give again for comparison, but in the meantime we reproduce the address to show how cleverly the trick is done. As in the case of the Burns seal, the one on this letter has evidently been "doctored." It is in a dark wax, and the seal also holds a bit of the corner of the note, which in this case has been cut with sharp scissors. There are several suspicious things about the seal and its surroundings, which need not be gone into in detail.

There are three pretended autographs of Scott also, which we reproduce. Will the reader note the name "Walter" on the line of docket "9 and 10. Two autographs of Sir Walter Scott, paid 10s.," with any of the three Walters of the pretended autographs, and ask whether there is not a family resemblance between the four "Walters"?

*Walter Scott*

*Walter Scott*

*Walter Scott*

Another MS. we have in our possession, from the same bundle, is a pretended one of Scott, which is docketed in the same handwriting—(1) "Interesting letter, with poem annexed, 1 page quarto, 42s." and it is alleged that it also was from the Whitefoord Mackenzie sale. It is addressed to "James Andrews, George Square, Edinburgh," and on the right high corner is "Lasswade, paid 3d. per carrier," and on the left low corner the initials "W.S."

It is written on an evidently "doctored" double sheet of rusty-looking quarto, and where the seal should be there is a dirty thumb-mark. In the pretended letter Sir Walter says he has pleasure in sending a quotation (which he does to the extent of eighteen lines), but

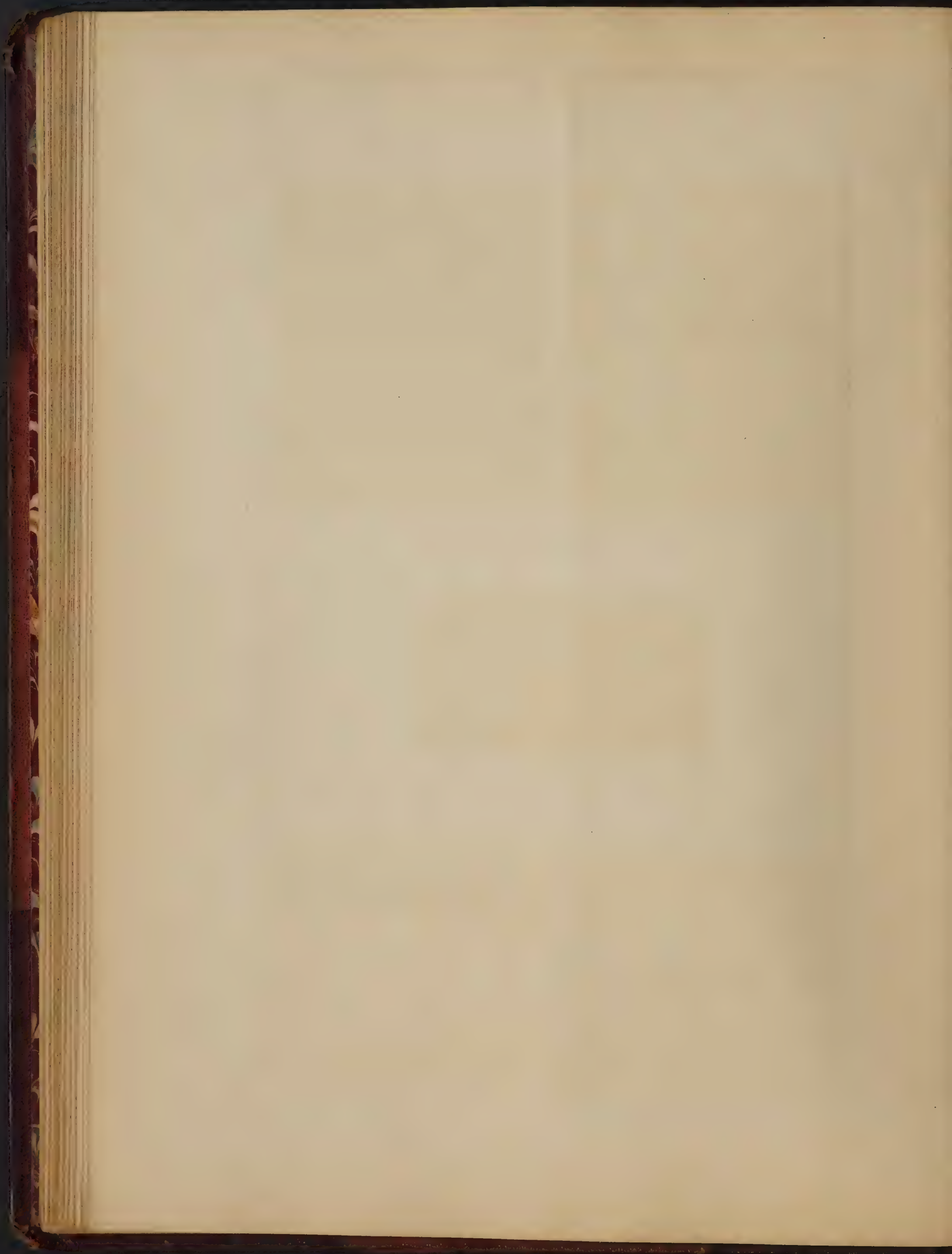
says he cannot allow the book out of its present domicile, because it is scarce and one of his treasures.

The other two documents we have in our possession are docketed—(1) "Scotland: the Rebellion of 1715;" (2) "Rare proclamation denouncing George I. as King of England by the Earl of Mar on behalf of the Pretender." In this case the person who has prepared the MS. for pawn has cut out the printed description of such a document from a sale catalogue, and has also cut out the portion of a newspaper report of the sale which indicates that the MS. fetched 70s. The writing of the MS. unfortunately, notwithstanding its hoary look, is suspiciously like in many places the writing of the docket, so that even a tyro in MSS. would not hesitate to declare that the docket and document were written by one and the same person.

Perhaps the publication of this note may bring out the genuine proclamation of the Earl of Mar, which was disposed of at the sale from the catalogue of which the cutting is taken. The catalogue description reads:—"Rebellion 1715. Mar, Earl of, Proclamation, 1 p. folio. Given at the Camp of Perth, the 1st of November 1715, to the Burrough of L'lithgow, signed Mar."

We close this article with a reference to one of the books which was sold at the same sale. It is a neat little book bound in half-calf, with red marbled covers, and has in gilt letters on the back, upon a ruby ground, "Letter on Glebes, 1747." The title-page sets forth that it is a supplement to the "Ministers' Widows' Scheme" in a letter to the clergy directing the improvement of their glebes, by Mr Robert Maxwell of Arkland, &c." We give below a tracing of some writing on the first fly-leaf, which, it will be observed, is in the same hand as the docketing of the MSS.







Early agricultural treatise pub-  
lished after the Rebellion of 1745  
upon land improvement -  
signed autograph of the author

Whiteford Mackenzie sale  
paid £1.3/-

Here a specific statement is made that this little book was sold at the Whiteford Mackenzie sale for 23s. Well, that simply was ascertained to be not true. It was written to deceive the pawnbroker. The book is of no importance, and it is understood to have been disposed of at the sale in question for something nearer 1s. than 23s.

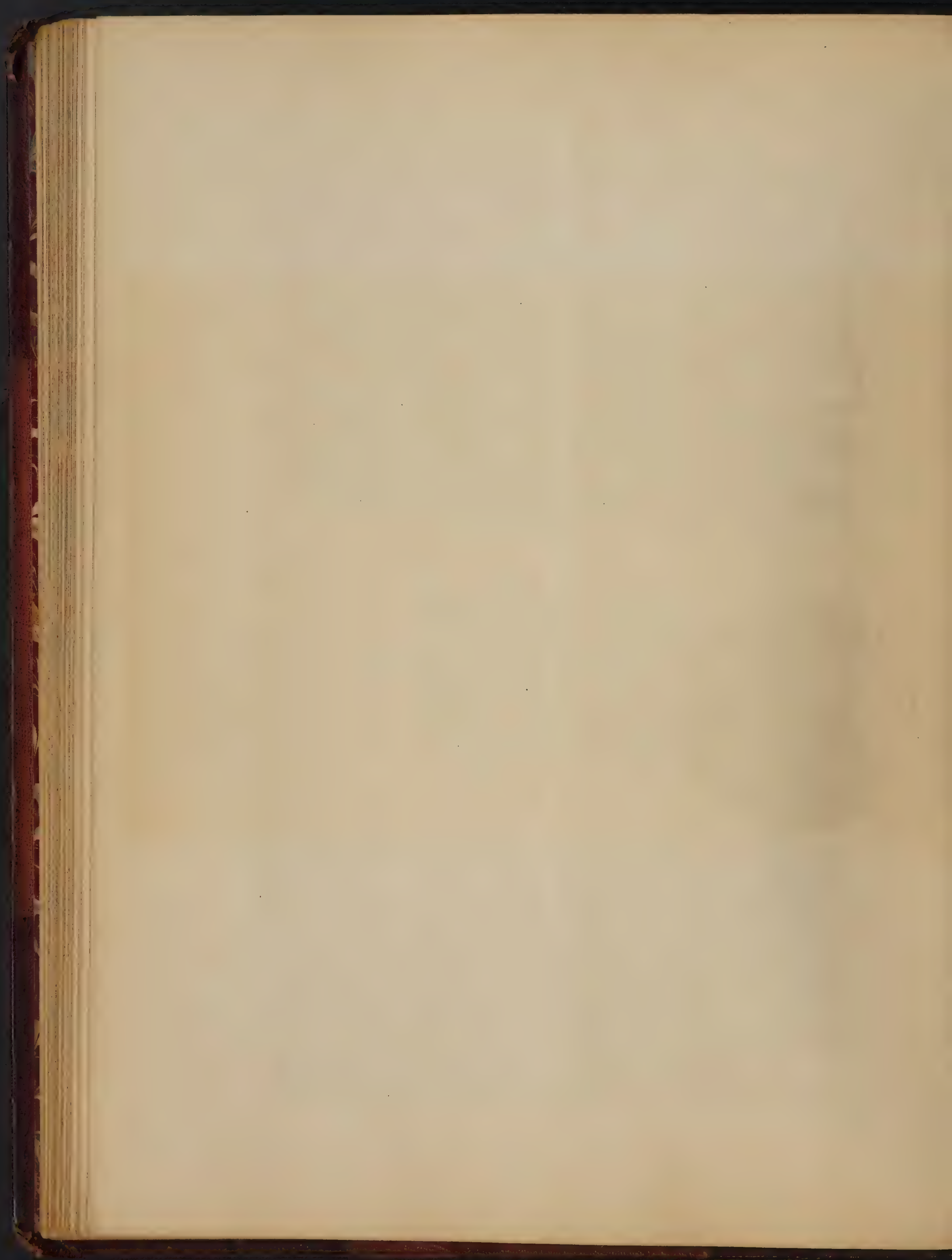
In the same shop we were courteously shown a copy of a book in three volumes - the "Life of Philip II." by a Mr Watson. It is a book of little value in itself; but it had upon it a pretended dedication by Sir Walter Scott to a friend "as a token of respect and esteem, &c." The dedication is a forgery, and it is in the same hand as the spurious letters we have been referring to.

Chiswick

Chiswick

Chiswick  
Chiswick







Dumfries 13<sup>th</sup> December 1793 Received from Mr John Wallace  
the sum of Two shillings and Sixpence being his sub-  
scription to the Club at the Jerusalem Tavern here  
for month ending this date \_\_\_\_\_

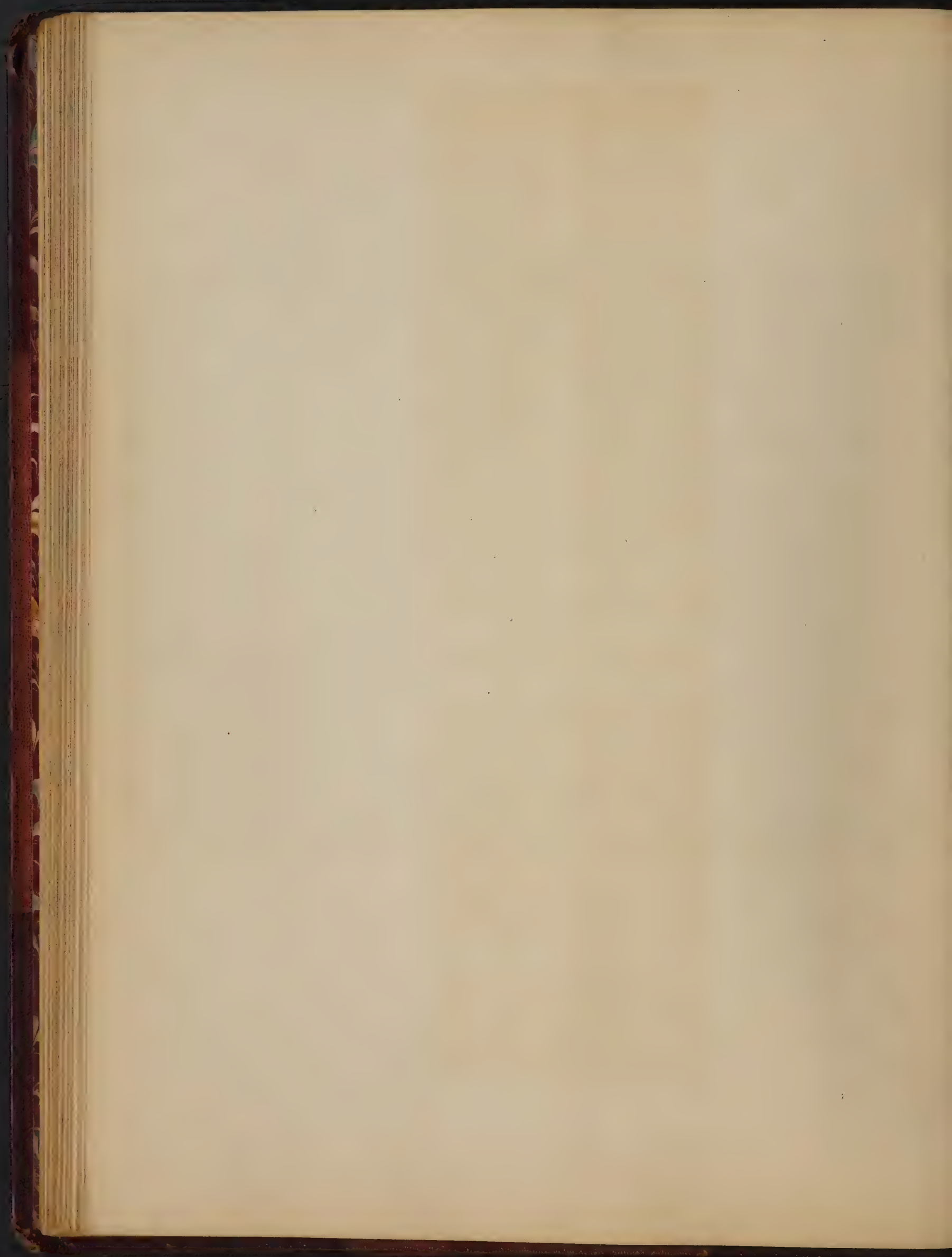
Rob<sup>t</sup> Burns



FORGED BURNS RECEIPT WITH FALSE

"BOOKPLATE."







"THE GREAT FORGERIES OF OLD MSS."

[To the Editor of the "EVENING DISPATCH."]

Express Office, Cumnock, November 24, 1892.

SIR,—As, under the above heading, after a brief introduction on the well-known forgeries of Chatterton, Ireland, and others, you have this week republished the whole of the correspondence which appeared in the *Cumnock Express* in the months of August, September, and October last, on certain alleged Burns MSS., the rather petulant remark being made at the close that "the Ayrshire editor closed the correspondence just at the stage when it became interesting;" you will, I am sure, allow me to state that I closed it for the very opposite reason. For what interest could it have for any one when it had come only to this—the one party making broad and sweeping assertions, which the other most flatly denied, the opponents of Mr Mackenzie making proposals to which that gentleman refused to agree; possibly, because the proposals were so urgently and so confidently made, that a suspicion was raised in his mind that his accusers had a "friend in court," in either the British Museum or the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, to which they urged him to submit his MSS., particularly his "John Hill letter," and that if he did so, they would only do it "Jeddart Justice;" it, at least, did so in the minds of several people; especially when they saw the opinion of Mr James Stillie pooh-poohed, though he is well known as, perhaps, the oldest and most experienced MSS. collector in Britain; a gentleman, too, of high principle and stainless integrity.

But why should not the parties take a different course, and one to which no suspicion could attach—submit the MSS. to, say, three competent lithographers, unacquainted with either party, and abide by their opinion? No course, surely, could be more fair than this, and we hope to see it adopted.—I am, &c.

A. B. TOMP.

[Why, then, did the Editor not suggest this in a note, and give Mr Mackenzie an opportunity of accepting the offer? This would have added interest to the controversy, and put the owner of the Hill letters in a warm corner. Mr Mackenzie would have been bound to reply to the suggestion, and doubtless his opponents would have agreed to abide by the decision of any competent authorities. As to the officials of the British Museum administering "Jeddart justice" to any manuscripts submitted to them, only those who have come in contact with the heads of the various departments know the infinite trouble they take in settling any such disputes as the present, and the scrupulous fairness with which they treat any manuscript submitted for their opinion. In fact, they are too fair and too competent for our Mr Mackenzies and other "collectors."]

SIR,—I am glad that this system of letter-writing has come to the front by your valuable exposure. If those letters of Burns and Scott are genuine, why should Mr Mackenzie be afraid of their being seen when we know that by being proved original, the value increases one hundred fold, and therefore more valuable to the nation and the Scottish public all over the world?

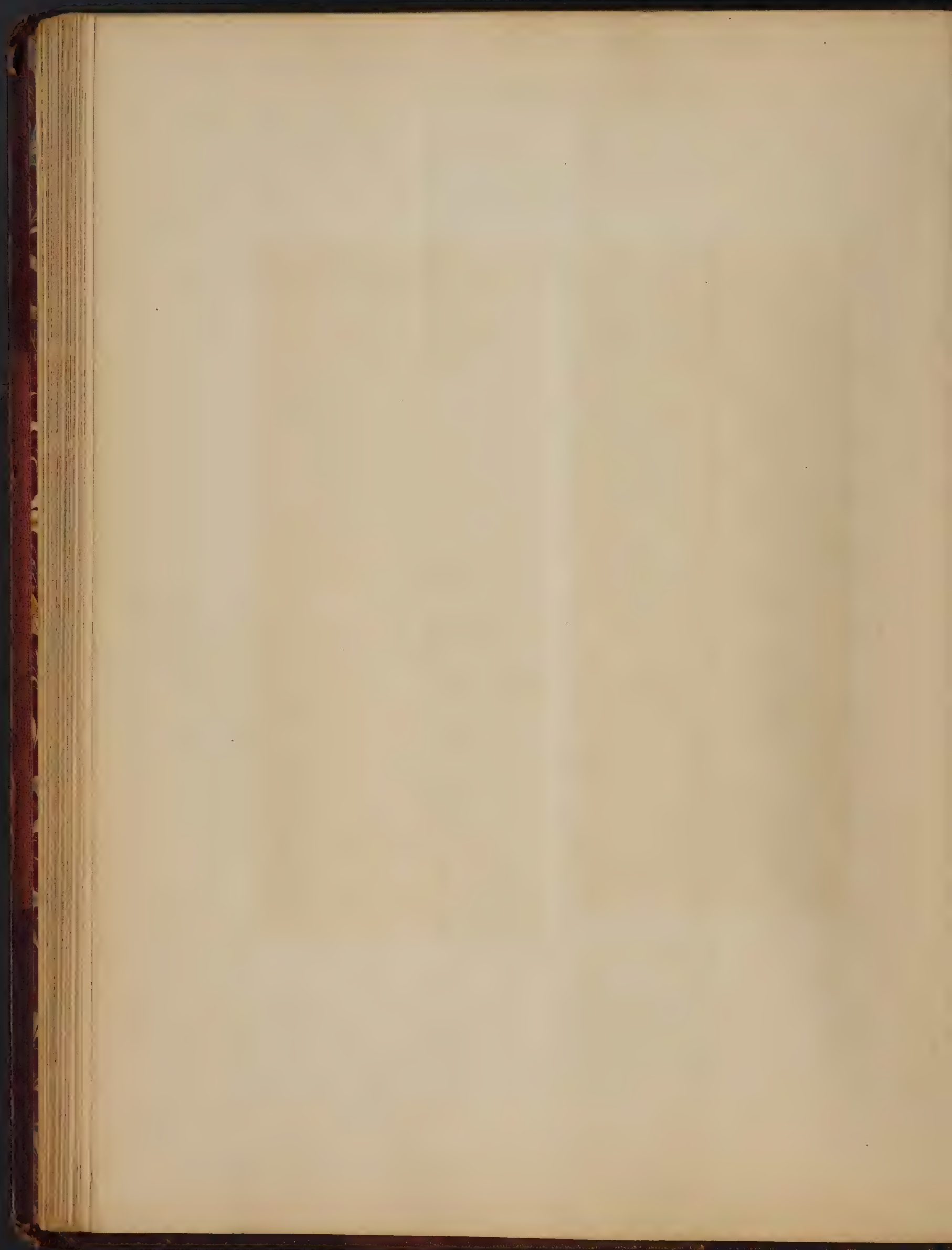
As to the "Rillbank collection," I said distinctly that they were not written by Burns. At first sight they looked well, but when the critical eye scanned them he could see through the paper, as an expert can discriminate between old china and the would-be old. In some of those letters they are coloured to give the old tone to them, and others are as if put through a press and glazed. Now the paper used by R. Burns had rough edges like the bank notes, and rough on the surface.

It is really deplorable to think that so many copies of "Scots Wha Hae" should be floating about at long prices, and that short-sighted people like Americans and Colonials should be taken in by such combined trickery, as if every valuable letter was leaving the country. But that's all in the play.

Now, why does not Mr Mackenzie at once show them to the recognised authorities to prove their genuineness? I hope you will warn the people against being imposed upon.—I am, &c.

CRITIC.







#### A PARALLEL CASE.

Edinburgh, November 24, 1892.

SIR,—The unwillingness of Mr Mackenzie to bring forward his MSS. for the inspection of competent judges leads me to refer your readers to Sir Walter Scott's Journal (1829), pp. 297-9, Vol. II., recently issued by Mr David Douglas. The remarks of Sir Walter in his letter to Sir Thomas Dick Lauder regarding the MS. of the "Vestiarium Scoticum" of the "ingenious Messrs Hay Allan" are quite *apropos* to the present controversy. The suggestion that the MS. of the "Vestiarium" should be submitted for examination was not complied with, and the opinion of Sir Walter Scott slightly spoken of in a letter thus—"I never heard it respected among antiquaries as of the least value. It is quite indifferent to me." And this was written in 1829! There can surely be but one opinion regarding the Burns MSS. If genuine and hitherto unpublished, it cannot be wrong to bring them under the notice of a small committee of experts, who would examine contents, ink, paper, and watermarks, and investigate the history of these precious (?) documents. If genuine and worthy of being printed, by all means let this be done; if otherwise, the fate spoken of by Mr Dott is their due.—I am, &c.

VIATOR.

[The manuscript itself was not submitted for examination, but a description of it and a transcript of a portion were laid before Sir Walter, who assured the Society of Scottish Antiquaries that the style and dialect of the specimen shown him were utterly false; a most feeble and clumsy imitation of the genuine writing of the period, and declared his conviction that the MS. itself must be an absolute fabrication.]

#### THE POEMS.

63 High Street, Hawick, November 24, 1892.

SIR,—I have read with much interest the articles and the letters in your paper on the Burns forgeries (?) Until we get further light on the matter, however, it would be premature to be too decided in an expression of opinion. But there can be no harm in criticising the poems which appeared in your yesterday's issue. And to those who are conversant with the works of Burns it must seem somewhat singular how it is that he has in these poems fallen so far below his usual standard of excellence.

So far as the general sentiment of the lines "To the Rosebud" is concerned, little exception can be taken; but when we come to analyse the connection which the different parts of it have to each other we perceive an inappositeness totally at variance with the well-known idiomatic way in which Burns usually expressed himself. It may be argued that this defect in the verses has until now hindered them from being published, but it seems a very injudicious mode of getting over the difficulty as regards the poverty and general immaturity of the verses.

Again, take the "Poor Man's Prayer." Is it the least likely that Burns would have written the line

O Chatham, nursed in ancient virtues lore?

It is not, I think, impertinent to ask, what does this mean? are virtues ever ancient? and what lore can appertain to virtue? Take again the third line of the same verse, where we have

Whom thou and I adore.

Is it at all like Burns' mode of expression? Burns was essentially a man who felt the sentiments which he expressed, and the language he used scarcely ever fell below the demands of the subject. But here we see a want of clearness of thought as well as of suitable expression. The whole poem bears traces of this immaturity. I may here note the improbability of Burns invoking Chatham. The Earl of Chatham died in 1773, when Burns was 19 years of age. Burns published his poems in 1786. William Pitt, son of the Earl of Chatham, would not—could not, in fact—be invoked as "Chatham." The Earl of Chatham ceased to be Premier in December 1767. Are we then to infer that Burns wrote "The Poor Man's Prayer" before he was nine years of age? Unless we do this his invocation "O Chatham, &c." has neither relevance nor weight. In the other two specimens—viz., in the lines addressed to John Lapraik, and in the verses written after hearing a sermon preached in Tarbolton Church—I fail to discern any traces of genuine poetry such as we elsewhere have in authentic poems by Burns. The strain of the thought, too, is quite foreign to the tenor of Burns' idiosyncrasy. There was very little of the æsthetic in Burns. In general, all that he wrote—if we may judge from what we otherwise have that is without doubt his—is simple, and gracefully expressed. There is seldom or ever any effort perceivable in the manner in which he brings his thoughts before us. There is a naturalness, so to speak, in Burns' composition which is totally absent from the poems I have thus reviewed.

I could say much more that might perhaps help to make your readers be slow to accept these poems as Burns', but your space will, I daresay, not afford it.—I am, &c.

J. C. GOODFELLOW.

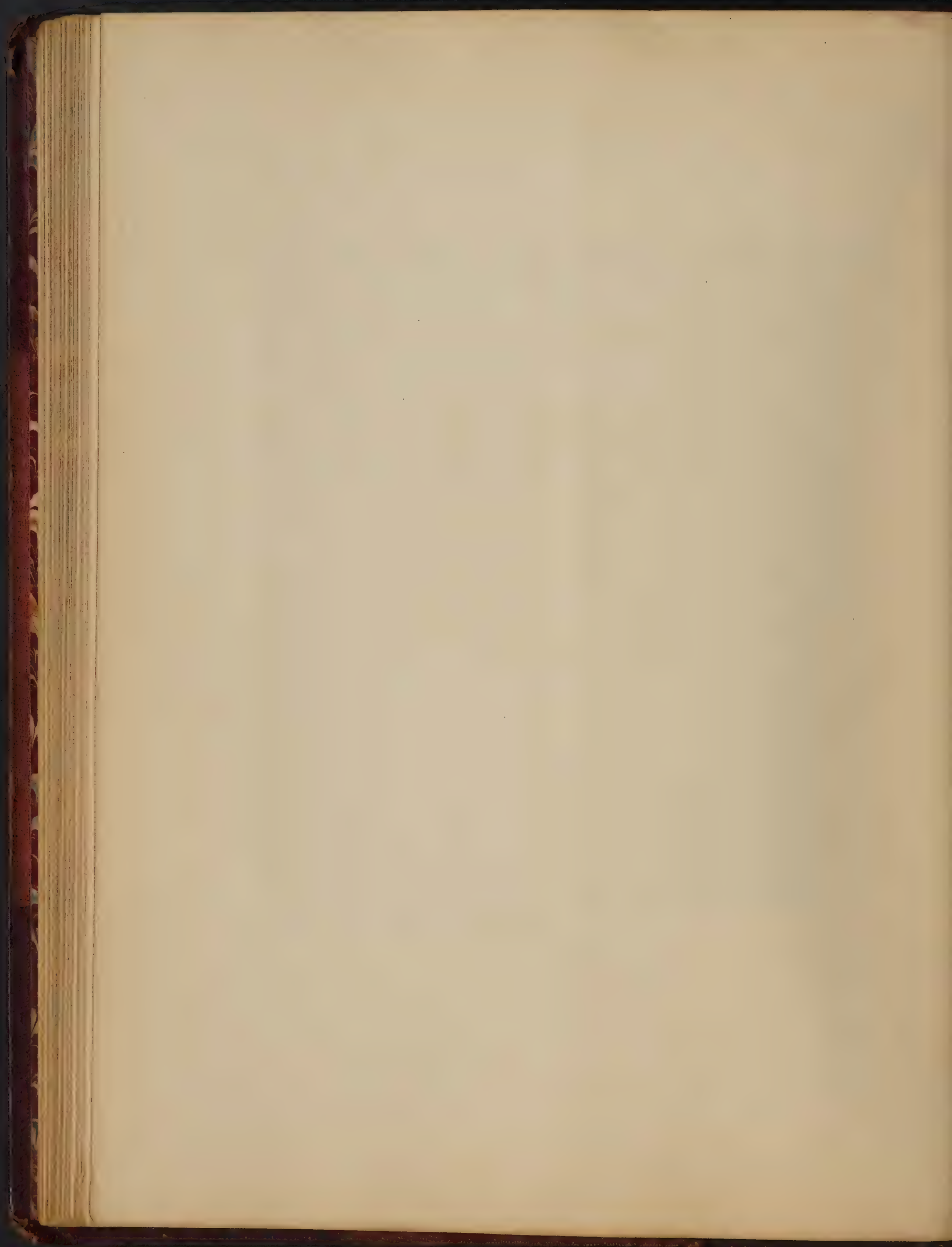
#### A REMARKABLE LETTER FROM MR STILLIE.

As our first edition was going to press to-day we received the following letter from James Stillie, bookseller, 19 George Street, Edinburgh (the peculiar wording is Mr Stillie's):—

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

Mr Stillie respectfully mentions that from his continued illness, he has not been able to attend to this matter, and has therefore employed his agent to investigate into the articles that have appeared in the *Cummock Express* and the *Dispatch*. As far as the title "Great Forgeries" and argument about Forgeries of Burns Manuscripts, of which he only is concerned, he considers as pure fiction and utterly untrue, and of great damage to his business as a dealer in manuscripts.

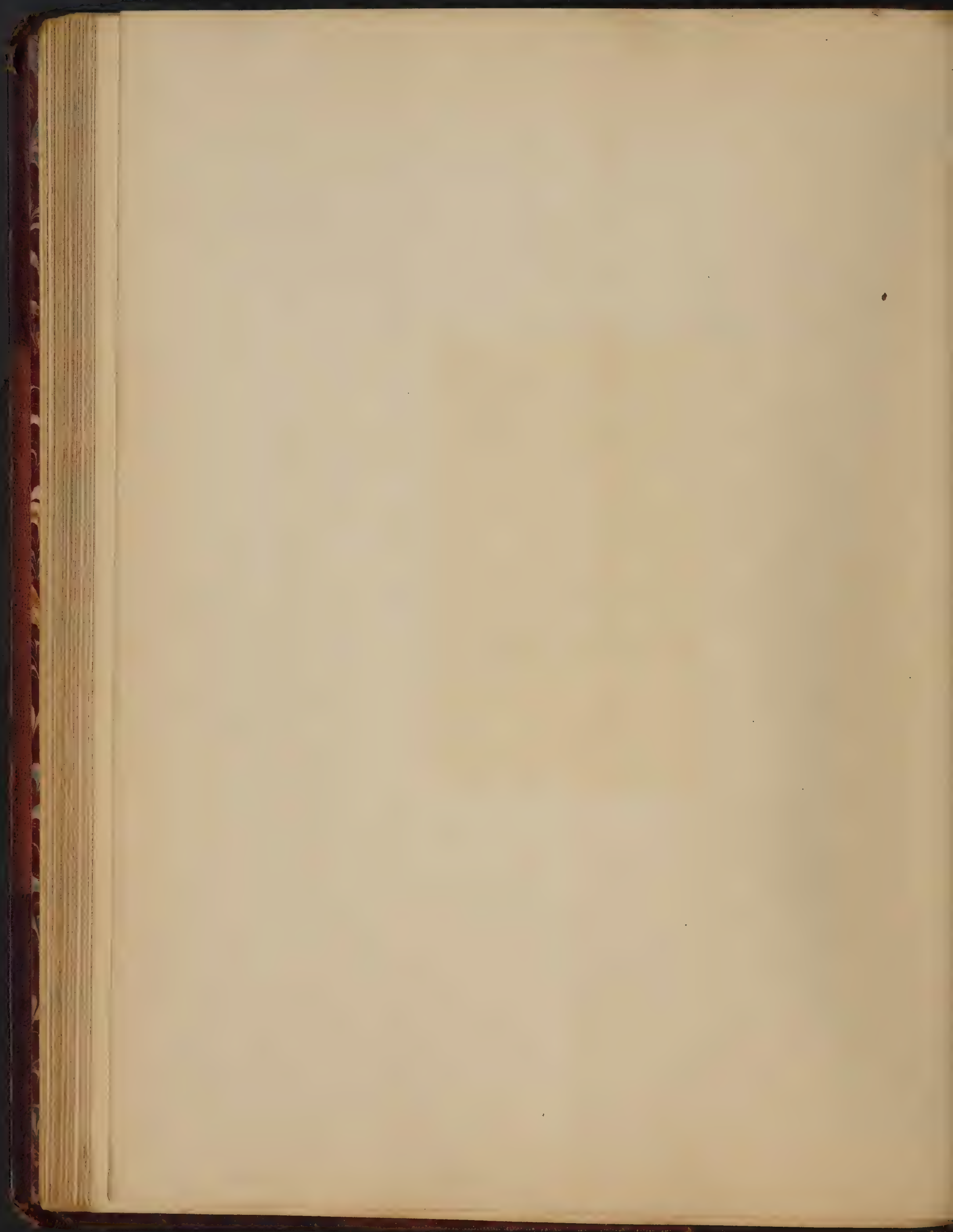






THE TIMES, NOVEMBER 25, 1892.

APOCRYPHAL BURNS AND SCOTT MANUSCRIPTS.—It is alleged by experts that for some years past there has been carried on—it is believed in Edinburgh—a most systematic and wholesale forgery of letters and other documents purporting to be written by Scott and Burns. The forgeries are executed with great skill; they have been sold at public auctions and by the hands of booksellers to well-known and experienced collectors. The *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* of the 22d inst. contains a long article on the subject, from which it appears that several manuscripts, the genuineness of which is challenged by certain experts, have within the last year or two been either sent for sale to auction-rooms, given to public museums, or described in newspapers by a gentleman, who insists on their genuineness, and has had them examined by a body of gentlemen in whose judgment he expresses full confidence, but declines to submit them for examination to the experts of the British Museum or to say where he obtained them. The *Evening Dispatch* promises further revelations on the subject, which is one of very considerable importance for autograph collectors and the public generally; but it has no doubt that the gentleman in question has acted throughout in perfect good faith.





## Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.

EDINBURGH, SATURDAY, November 26, 1892.

### SUMMARY OF TO-DAY'S NEWS.

Ten MSS. forgeries are traced to-day to one Smith.

MANY of the documents have been purchased by Mr Brown, Bristo Place, Mr Stillie, and others—no doubt in perfect good faith.

"THE Poor Man's Prayer," so confidently declared by Mr Mackenzie to be a poem of Burns', has been traced to the *London Magazine*, where it was published when Burns was but seven years of age.

We illustrate to-day certain comparisons between sham and real Thackeray letters, and between these and the forger's handwriting, and the writing in the bogus Scott letters.

We also give a very interesting analytical report on the Kennedy Burns MSS.

In some comments on these MSS. the writer states that when Mr Mackenzie was asked to look at some "Burns relics," he insisted on the necessity of "indubitable proofs" being submitted of their genuineness.

INTERESTING letters from Mr Thomas Chapman and Mr Maloney are published—the former declaring that the question is now one for Captain Henderson.





THE MSS. FORGERIES.

Our first edition went to press yesterday without the fac-similes of the MSS. forgeries which were referred to in the body of the article. For the benefit of our western, and chiefly of our Ayrshire subscribers, who receive only the first edition, we reproduce the chief fac-similes. These are a forged receipt of Burns, with a false book-plate attached, and

the docquet in which this was enclosed. The docquet is (presumably) in the forger's ordinary handwriting, and our readers will at once perceive many points of similarity in the two documents, showing that the writer of the docquet had been accustomed to copy the handwriting of Burns. For instance, compare "money" with "month," the

capital "R" and "B" of Robert Burns, and the word "Tavern" in the two documents. We also add three fac simile reproductions of forgeries of Scott's signature. It is very easily imitated, and it appears that the manufacture of Scott forgeries has been carried on more actively than those of Burns, and that hundreds of collectors have been "taken in" by them.

THE DOCQUET.

*N<sup>o</sup> 4 Burnsiana*

*Robert. Burns. Scottish Poet*

*Autograph Receipt for money to a Tavern Club  
at Dumfries. dated 1793*

*Whitford Mackenzie Sale.  
£5-6/-*

THE FORGED BURNS RECEIPT WITH FALSE BOOKPLATE.

*Dumfries 13<sup>th</sup> December 1793 Received from M<sup>r</sup> John Wallace  
the sum of Two shillings and Sixpence being his sub-  
scription to the Club at the Jerusalem Tavern here  
for month ending this date*

*Rob<sup>t</sup>. Burns*

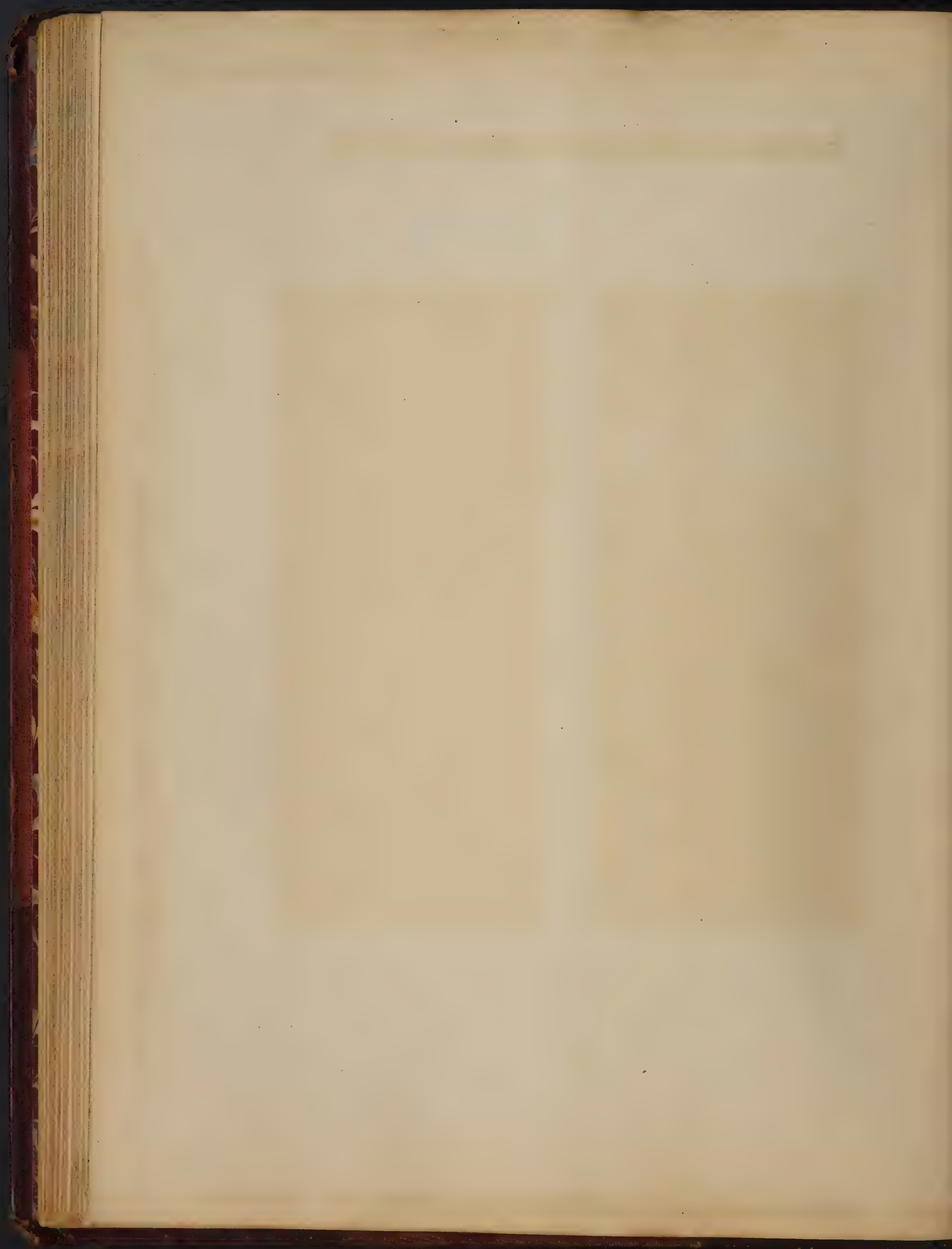


*Wallace*

*Wallace*

*Wallace*

FORGED SIGNATURES OF SIR W. SCOTT.





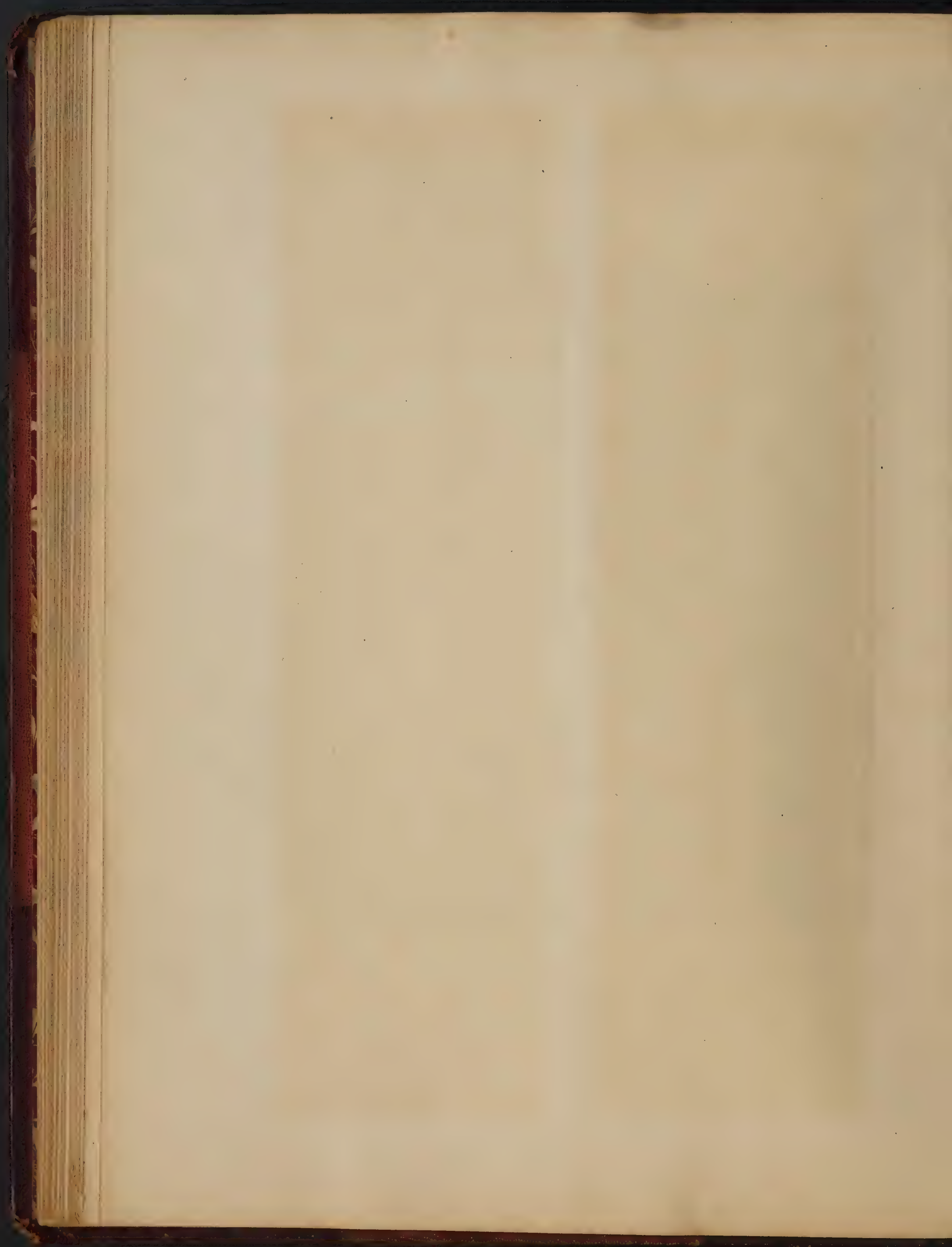
In the assertions of Mr James Mackenzie, F.S.A. Scot., are to be believed, Robert Burns turned his attention to poetical composition at a very early age. On the 23d of September this year a letter from Mr Mackenzie's pen appeared in the *Quinnock Express*, in which he stated that "any man who really knows the writings of Burns should read the following lines, and having done so, consider for a moment if he cannot discover in them the sentiments of our National Bard." We confess we read the lines of the poem referred to, and entitled "The Poor Man's Prayer," but failed to see how "the sentiments of our National Bard" could possibly be discovered in the specimen of "the unpublished MS. in his [Mackenzie's] possession" which was introduced to public notice for the first time; verses—comparative doggerel, at the best, which were stated to be "addressed to Gilbert by his brother Robert Burns, with his Christian name spelt in full in this instance, a thing seldom done by him." Now, it happens—as a correspondent points out—that this very poem, so belauded by Mr Mackenzie as a genuine Burns production, appeared in the columns of a publication styled *The London Magazine* of September 1766, when Robert Burns was but seven years of age! The verses are, in the magazine, said to be by a certain "Simon Hedge, Labourer," whom we will assume to be Robert Burns, *etate* seven. Now, here are a few of the lines written by this "poetical prodigy," not even in his teens:—

No lawless passion swelled my even breast,  
which at his years could only be expected;  
although he must have commenced his matrimonial career at an earlier period of his existence than is generally accredited to him by his biographers, if he relates his own experience in the lines:—

While I, contented with my homely cheer,  
Saw round my knees our prattling children play.  
Burns, as we all know, was fond of children—

(he was "the best of fathers," says Thomas Carlyle)—but higher laws than those of Mr Mackenzie, F.S.A. Scot., seem to militate against the possibility of Burns—with all his many faults—being charged with paternity at the age of seven. The position thus resolves itself into this—either, if the handwriting of the verses is that of Burns, he was a literary thief, and sent these verses, when he grew to manhood's estate, to his brother Gilbert as his own original composition, adding the last verse (not in the *London Magazine*)—

Then joy to thee, and to thy children peace,  
The grateful hind shall drink from plenty's horn;  
And while they share the cultured land's increase,  
The poor man'll bless the day when Pitt was born,  
Saying, be it remembered, his "full name" to his corner, and thus adopting them as his own, with the remark, "I think the sentiment expressed in this poem is an improvement on the other;" or else a despicable forger has fathered a poem on Robert Burns which he would never have written, and therefore could not acknowledge, writing a clumsy wind-up verse to seal the occasion by its application to his brother and his children, we unhesitatingly adhere to the latter alternative; and while agreeing with Mr Mackenzie that "much is still to be told," we must demand that he shall tell without any wriggling where he got this precious document, "The Poor Man's Prayer," and if he refuses the information which we ask, we are content to leave his conduct to the judgment of all his countrymen who reverence Burns and abhor quackery. We go further, and say that if he will supply us with the titles of the other poems from which he quotes, commencing "Eternal mind" and "The sophist spins," we will undertake to convince him that they are not from the pen of Robert Burns, but concocted in the great manufactory of forgeries of which Mr Mackenzie has for so many years been so liberal & unconscious a patron.





## THE GREAT FORGERIES.

### LATEST DEVELOPMENTS.

THE unravelling of the MSS. mystery proceeds apace. Indeed, it goes on rapidly—wondrously rapidly. Now we have got upon the scene Mr Brown, bookseller, Bristo Place, and a mysterious person named Smith, the latter of whom we may now introduce to the public as one who will figure largely in this connection. Mr Brown has been the intermediary by which a large quantity of the spurious paper has found its way into circulation. We have no reason to doubt the *bona fide* character of Mr Brown's purchases, and sales. His judgment in this business may not be reckoned of a high order, and he may have been as much a dupe himself as the means of duping others. In the circumstances which have now been disclosed, we fully expect that Mr Brown will come forward and state what he knows of the forgeries, unless, indeed, he adheres to his former view that there are no forgeries at all. But in the meantime we leave both alone.

Let us turn now to Mr Mackenzie. This gentleman's career as a Burns critic, though brilliant while it lasted, has been but brief. Of him it may be said that he went up like a rocket and has come down like a stick, and poor stick at that. He pledged his faith that Burns wrote "The Poor Man's Prayer." But alas for the reputation of Mr Mackenzie an expert correspondent has quickly unearthed the impudent deception. The story is told fully elsewhere. Before leaving Mr Mackenzie, however, it is but bare justice to him to admit that where his own interests are concerned he is not so blate as he may seem. When a London publisher some time ago offered him a chair made from the flooring of Mr Burns' Dumfries house, "nothing," it is said in the words of one who tells the story, "could be more satisfactory than the manner in which Mr M. insisted on Mr Stock's submitting indubitable proof that what he offered for sale was *bona fide*." Ah! Most wise Mr Mackenzie. There is nothing like "indubitable proof"—when it can be got.

This story is narrated in a curious way, and if we tell it now it is with apologies to the author, for he may not know that it is going to see the light in this fashion. But it ought not to be hid under a bushel. The gentleman in question is a well-known citizen, whose name would carry confidence wherever it is known over Scotland. He had occasion some time ago to annotate a number of "Burns' poems," purchased by Mr Kennedy, banker, New York, and presented to the city of Edinburgh in 1890. His notes on these poems and his supplementary one added only a few days before we announced the Forgeries (and all unconscious of the coming disclosures) will be read with great interest. Throughout these Notes there is visible a trace of scepticism, which we may say gathered force upon later reflection and inquiry until it attained something like absolute certainty that all was not right.

One or two peculiarities may be singled out. The writer of the notes remarks that "an attempt to clean them [the MSS.] by washing has not been so desirably successful as to make one wish to repeat the experiment." Here is a significant trace of the forger. Then mark the composition of the note in Sir Walter Scott's (the sham Sir Walter's) handwriting. Does any sane man believe that Sir Walter Scott ever penned that note? Observe, too, how often Hogg endorsed the Burns MSS. Why the forger turned out signatures by the hundred. So liberal was he with them that in one case he makes Burns sign his name twice. In one of his notes, the correspondent to whom we are indebted for these facts, thus comments on certain MSS. procured from Mr Stillie, "Where did Stillie get these? It will come out some day." He was a true prophet.

We give our correspondent's Notes in full below.

## A CASE FOR CAPTAIN HENDERSON.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

Edinburgh, November 25, 1892.

SIR,—Forgery upon forgery seems to be exposed by the publication in the *Dispatch* of to-day. I am much interested in the documents given as "from the Whiteford Mackenzie sale." None of these documents, either Burns or Scott, was in the Mackenzie library nor sold at the sale. I catalogued and sold Mr Mackenzie's collection, and every lot passed through my hands. There were a few most interesting Burnsiana sold then, the smallest price being £17, 17s. The dokets on those papers sold at the Equitable Loan Company's sale, which you *fac-similed* are most IMPUDENT FORGERIES (I give no opinion of the contents) and are intended to convey an utterly false meaning. No expert in literary matters is required. It is a case for Captain Henderson and his experts, to whose careful attention I specially commend this impudent forgery, which is calculated to do injury in many ways.—I am, &c.

THOMAS CHAPMAN.

## MR MACKENZIE STUMPED.

"THE POOR MAN'S PRAYER."

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

Edinburgh, November 25, 1892.

SIR,—In his letter to the *Cummock Express* of 23d September, Mr Mackenzie, F.S.A., says:—

SIR,—The time has come when all senseless objections to what is good and true in relation to Burns must be left to be answered by the Poet himself. Any man who really knows the writings of Burns should read the following lines, and having done so, consider for a moment if he cannot discover in them the sentiments of our National Bard. Some slight differences may exist in the actual writings, due no doubt to a hard quill pen, and one that has often been written with, or even to the mood in which the Poet was at the time, according to the subject in hand. I observe, when he is engaged on the sublime and heroic, he is often uneven in his lines; but to one versed in his style, however, the same cast of hand is in all. Strange, in a book which I have, written by his old teacher, Mr Murdoch, one may easily trace the style of writing of the one in the other. Therefore it is, I consider, a waste of time to do more than submit the following verses, copied from the unpublished MS. in my possession, to speak for themselves. The first is addressed to Gilbert by his brother, Robert Burns, and his Christian name is spelt in full in this instance—a thing seldom done by him:—

### THE POOR MAN'S PRAYER.

Amidst the more important toils of state,  
The counsels labouring in thy patriot soil:  
Though Europe from thy voice expect her fate,  
And thy keen glance extend from pole to pole.

O Chatham, nursed in ancient virtues lore,  
To these sad strains incline a favouring ear,  
Think on the God whom thou and I adore,  
Nor turn unpitying from the poor man's prayer.

Ah me! how blest was once a peasant's life,  
No lawless passion swelled my even breast;  
Far from the roaring waves of civil strife,  
Sound were my slumbers, and my heart at rest.

I ne'er for guilty painful passions roved,  
But taught by Nature and by choice to wed  
From all the hamlet culled whom best I loved,  
With her I shared my heart, with her my bed.

To gild her worth I asked no wealthy dower,  
My toil could feed her, and my arm defend;  
I envied no man's riches, no man's power,  
I asked of none to give, of none to lend.

And she, the faithful partner of my care,  
When ruddy evening streaked the western sky,  
Looked towards the uplands if her mate was there,  
Or through the beeches cast an anxious eye—

While I, contented with my homely cheer,  
Saw round my knees our prattling children play,  
And oft with pleased attention sat to hear,  
The little history of their idle day.

After depicting famine caused in a land of plenty by the corn being taken to other lands, and praying Chatham to prevent this—

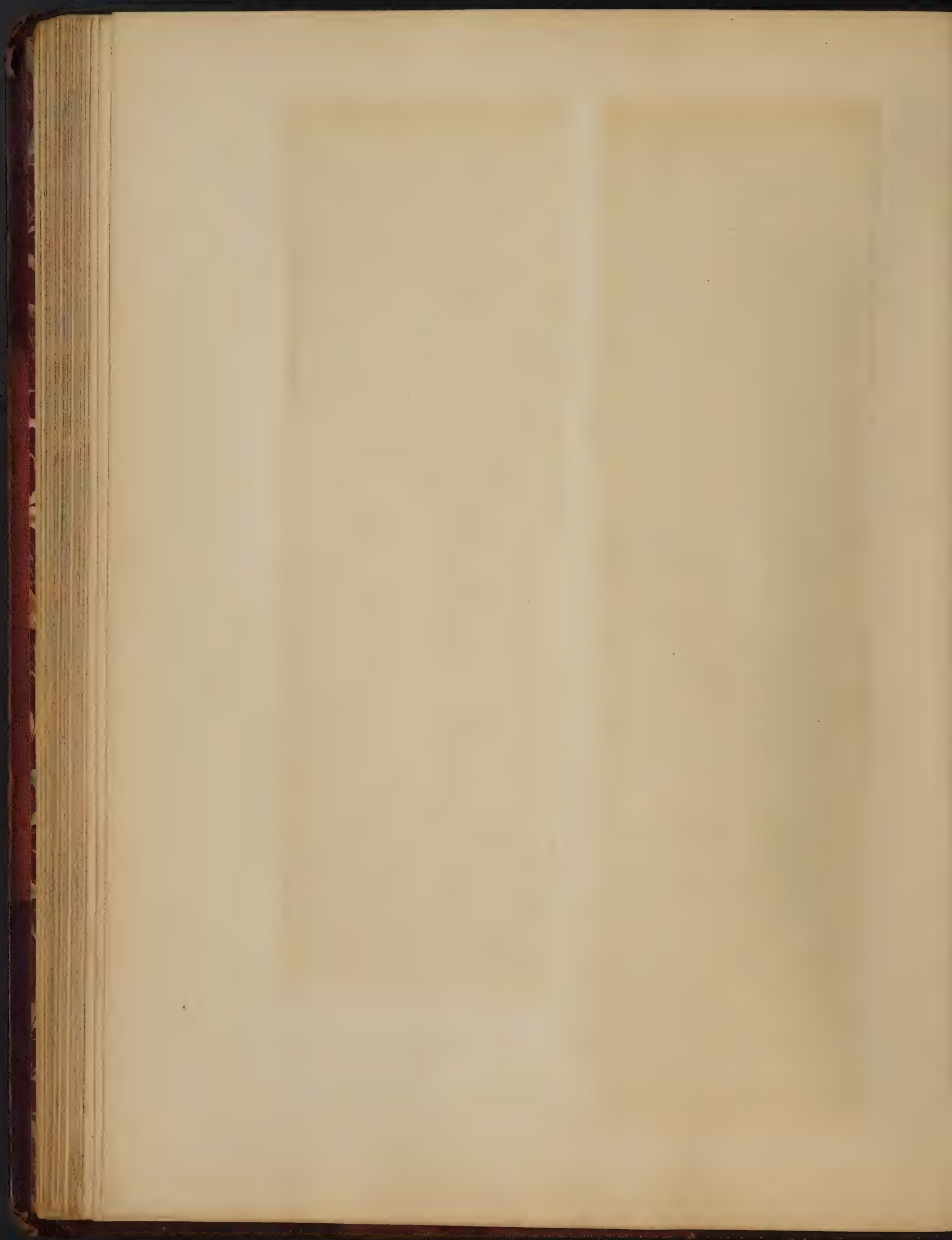
"If still the gripping cormorants withhold  
The fruits which rain and genial seasons send."

He concludes in the twenty-third verse with—

Then joy to thee, and to thy children peace,  
The grateful hind shall drink from plenty's horn;  
And while they share the cultured land's increase,  
The poor shall bless the day when Pitt was born.

I think the sentiment expressed in this poem is an improvement on the other.

ROBT. BURNS.





The original MSS., as I stated formerly, can all be seen at my address. And now I leave this with your readers, convinced that after reading these lines it will be difficult to convince them that such are other than the genuine productions of our national poet, and that no amount of anonymous fiction will do more than show that they can stand the test, and, in this case, may have been the means of increasing their knowledge of the poet's works, and that much is still to be told.—I remain, &c.

JAMES MACKENZIE, F.S.A., Scot.

If Burns was the author of the above poem, then all I can say is he must have been a poetical prodigy, as on page 482 of *The London Magazine* for 1766 there appears a poem entitled "Extracts from The Poor Man's Prayer. Addressed to the Earl of Chatham. By Simon Hedge, Labourer." I enclose a copy of this production. The verses are only given as "extracts" from the *Prayer*, which must have appeared in its complete form in some other journal of the day. The question is, Was Burns "Simon Hedge," and did he pen the lines when he was seven years old?—I am, &c.

GEORGE STRONACH.

THE POOR MAN'S PRAYER.

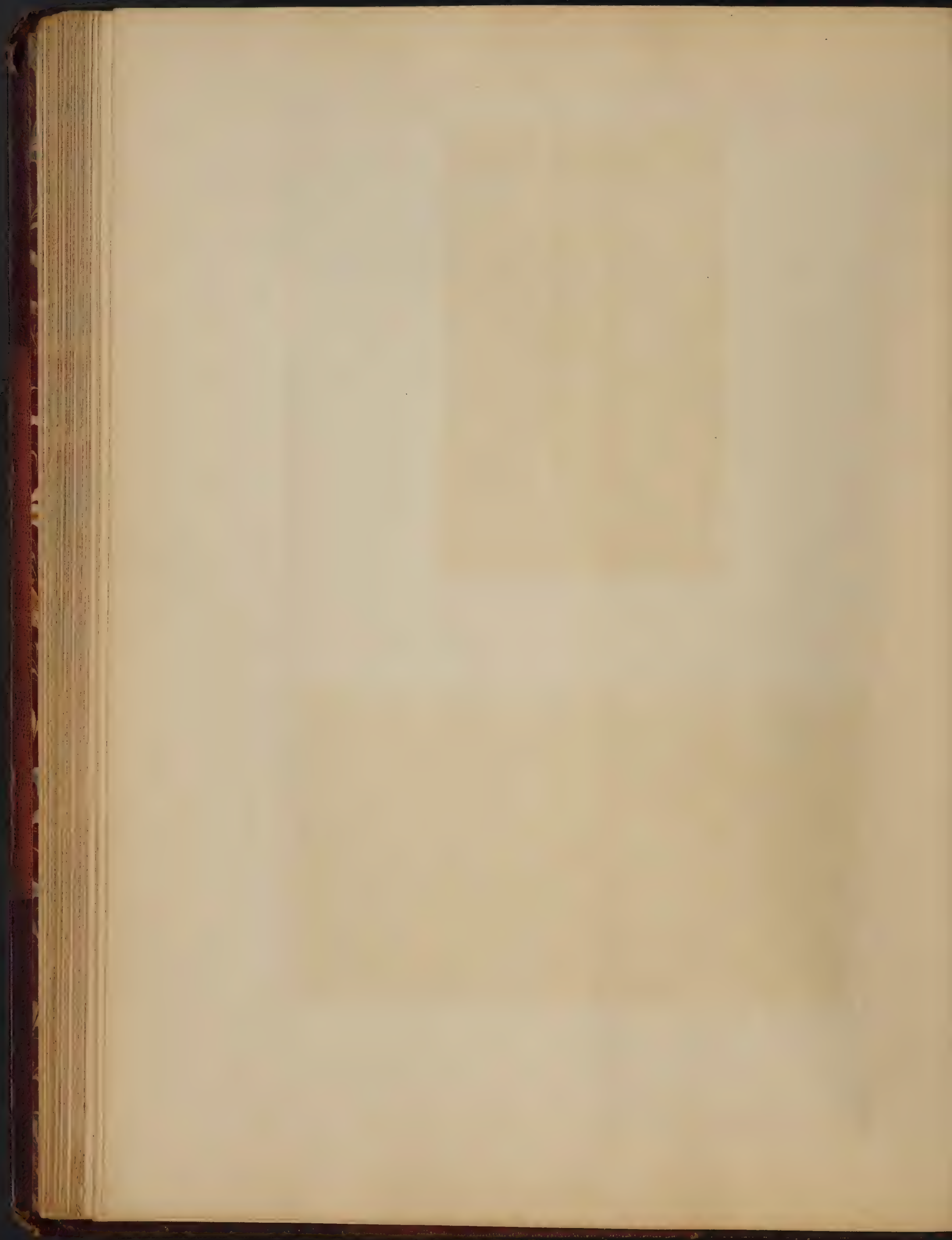
(As it appeared in the *London Magazine*, 1766.)

Amidst the more important toils of state,  
The counsels lab'ring in thy patriot soul,  
Though Europe from thy voice expect her fate,  
And thy keen glance extend from pole to pole,  
O Chatham! nurs'd in ancient Virtue's lore,  
To these sad strains incline a favouring ear;  
Think on the God, whom thou and I adore,  
Nor turn unpitying from the poor man's prayer.  
Ah me! how blest was once a peasant's life!  
No lawless passion swell'd my even breast;  
Far from the stormy waves of civil strife,  
Sound were my slumbers, and my heart at rest.  
I ne'er for guilty, painful pleasures rov'd,  
But, taught by nature, and by choice to wed,  
From all the hamlet cull'd whom best I lov'd,  
With her I staid my heart, with her my bed.  
To gild her worth I ask'd no wealthy power,  
My toil could feed her, and my arm defend;  
In youth, or age, in pain, or pleasure's hour,  
The same fond husband, father, brother, friend.  
But ah! how chang'd the scene! on the cold stones,  
Where wont, at night, to blaze the cheerful fire,  
Pale famine sits, and counts her sated bones,  
Still sighs for food, still pines with vain desire,  
My faithful wife, with ever-streaming eyes,  
Hangs on my bosom her dejected head;  
My helpless infants raise their feeble cries,  
And from their father claim their daily bread.  
Dear tender pledges of my honest love,  
On that bare bed behold your brother lie:  
Three tedious days with pinching want he strove,  
The fourth, I saw the helpless cherub die.  
Nor long shall ye remain. With visage sour  
Our tyrant lord commands us from our home;  
And arm'd with cruel laws coercive power,  
Bids me and mine o'er barren mountains roam.  
Yet never, Chatham, have I pass'd a day  
In riot's orgies, or in idle ease;  
Ne'er have I sacrific'd to sport and play,  
Or wish'd a pamper'd appetite to please.  
Hard was my fate, and constant was my toil,  
Still with the morning's orient light I rose,  
Fell'd the stout oak, or rais'd the lofty pile,  
Farch'd in the sun, in dark December froze.  
Is it, that nature, with a niggard hand,  
Withholds her gifts from these once favour'd plains?  
Has God in vengeance to a guilty land,  
Sent dearth and famine to her lab'ring swains?  
Ah, no; yon hill, where daily sweats my brow,  
A thousand flocks, a thousand herds adorn;  
Yon field, where late I drove the painful plough,  
Feels all her acres crown'd with wavy corn.  
But what avails, that o'er the furrow'd soil,  
In autumn's heat, the yellow harvests rise,  
If artificial want elude my toil,  
Untasted plenty wound my craving eyes?  
In every port the vessel rides secure,  
That wafts our harvest to a foreign shore;  
While we the pangs of pressing want endure,  
The sons of strangers riot on our store.  
O, generous Chatham! stop those fatal sails,  
Once more with outstretch'd arm thy Britons save;  
Th' unheeding crew but waits for favouring gales,  
O stop them, e'er they stem Italia's wave.  
From thee alone I hope for instant aid,  
Tis thou alone canst save my children's breath;  
O deem not little of our cruel need,  
O haste to help us, for delay is death.  
So may nor spleen, nor envy blast thy name,  
Nor voice profane thy patriot acts deride;  
Still may'st thou stand the first in honest fame,  
Unstung by folly, vanity, or pride.  
So may thy languid limbs with strength be brac'd  
And glowing health support thy active soul;  
With fair renown thy public virtue grac'd,  
Far as thou bad'st Britannia's thunder roll.

THE ALBUM OF THE MYSTERIOUS SMITH.

AN amateur collector—whose purchases of Scott, Burns, and other MSS. during the last six years have been fairly numerous—has kindly forwarded to us some of his chief examples to assist us in exposing these frauds. His collection has all come from the same source, and the first contribution to it was made about six years ago. Our informant was in the habit of buying old books from a certain bookseller in Edinburgh for a number of years previously. Near the end of 1886 (as far as he can recollect) he happened to look in to the shop of this bookseller, and asked if there was anything in his way for sale. The bookseller replied in the negative, and the gentleman was about to leave the shop, when he was recalled by the remark, "By the way, would you look at this?" And hereupon the bookseller put into his customer's hands an album containing a number of letters and autographs, including some of Sir Walter Scott, Admiral Cochrane (Viscount Dundonald), Thackeray, and others. Our informant's impression is that the bookseller had not purchased the album himself at the time, but represented that it had been offered to him for sale, and that he, knowing nothing about it, did not know whether to take it or not. After looking it over, however, our informant asked the price, and was told it was £1. Suspecting nothing in the way of forgery, he instantly closed with the offer, paying for the album on the spot. At this point a new actor entered upon the scene. This was a man who had been standing in the shop and listening to the conversation, and who now turned out to be the possessor of the album. This individual remarked to the bookseller that he ought to receive from the latter now more than the 15s., which was the original price he had set upon the book. Our informant thereupon generously handed over a few more shillings to the bookseller in order that the man's increased demand might be met without any friction, and the incident closed.

"Shortly after I bought the album," continues our informant (to quote his own statement), "the bookseller showed me some historical papers that seemed valuable. I asked him how he came by them. He told me ultimately that he got them from the same man who sold the album. I wanted to know how this man had got them, because I was confident that these papers were of very great value if genuine, and if they had been honestly come by, I was prepared to go in for buying the lot. The bookseller told me he was not sure of their validity, but that he had got them from Smith [we need not conceal names which are notorious.] Afterwards the bookseller told me Smith's story. It was that Smith was a clerk in the office of Mr Ferrier, W.S., and the latter asked him on one occasion to destroy a lot of old papers which were lying on the premises. Looking over these, Smith said he had discovered a lot of old documents of value, which, as they were to be destroyed anyhow, he thought he might as well make use of. And it was from these papers in Mr Ferrier's office that the ones now submitted for sale had been taken. I did not consider this satisfactory, and I wouldn't have them. Afterwards, I understand, the bookseller went to Mr Ferrier and asked him about the papers, and Mr Ferrier seemed very much surprised to know that they were of any value. I don't know that the bookseller managed to buy any from Mr Ferrier, but he says that after the latter's death, he got some things from his sister."





The album which our informant bought from this bookseller is an interesting production in several ways. In the first place, considering that it was supposed to contain a genuine letter by Scott, as well as several of his autographs, and a number of other valuable letters by eminent men, it can hardly be said that its original owner, Mr Smith, asked a high price when he demanded only 15s. His moderation, indeed, was truly astonishing. Then, again, a comparison of the pencilled writing (presumably by the owner) by which the various "treasures" in this album are catalogued, with that of a number of the letters and autographs themselves, reveals a striking similarity. In fact, if there is any truth in the theory that the handwriting reveals one's character, the person who wielded the pencil in this case might have been proud of the likeness between his calligraphy and that of such men as Scott, Admiral Cochrane, Hogg, Thackeray, and John Bright.

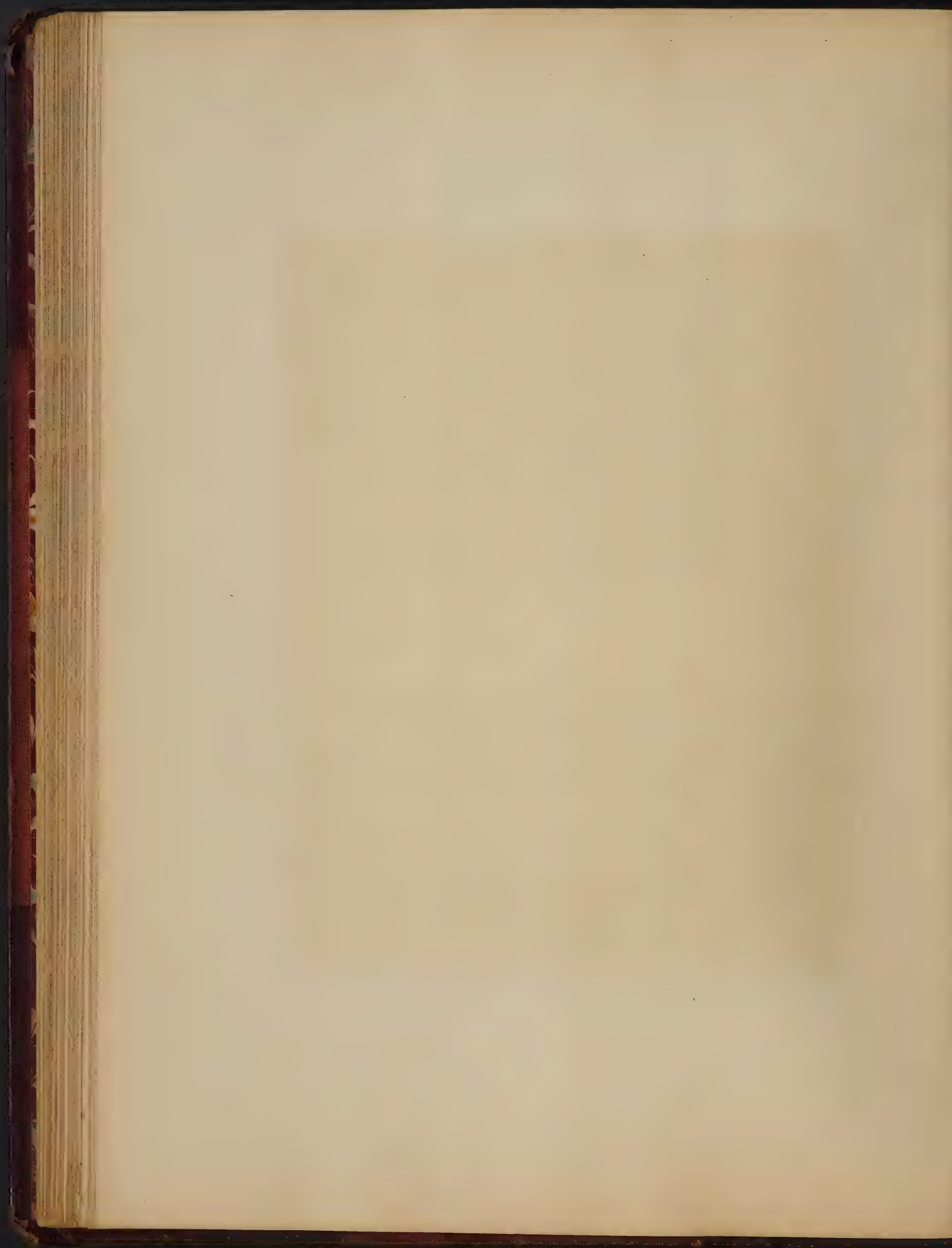
And this leads us to another remarkable feature of this album—namely, that most of the men whose supposed autographs it contains did, as a matter of fact beyond all doubt, write in very much the same style. Their calligraphy, of course, presents numerous differences of detail, but the general resemblance, between the writing of such diverse characters as Scott, Hogg, Cochrane, and John Bright, and the aforesaid Smith is singular, and, at first sight, a little startling. What a wonderful correspondence, too, must this lawyer have had in all this multitude of distinguished men whose literary remains have fallen to the fortunate Smith.

We cannot afford space to point out all the curious features of the documents in this album, which have much in common with the other batches of MSS. which we have examined. But two very noteworthy ones may be singled out for illustration. These manuscripts are docketted in the same way as the pawned batch commented upon by us yesterday and docketted too by the same universal lawyer-like hand. Here it is in the shape of a pencilled description of a letter by Thackeray:—

Letter by Mr Thackeray the novelist  
dated July 1856.  
Received from the late Henry Bond  
Secy of the Philosophical Inst Edin

Let any one compare this with the docket written by the impudent forger yesterday with the above writing, and will there be any doubt as to the identity between the two? Let us further compare the bogus Thackeray letter, endorsed by Smith, with a reproduction of a genuine Thackeray letter which appeared in *Scribner's Magazine* in 1887.

and affixed the Mackenzie book-plate to it, and whose writing is also on this book, we have no hesitation in declaring that the Mackenzie book-plate was also fraudulently affixed to the book.





Douglas Hotel  
Cambridge July 1856

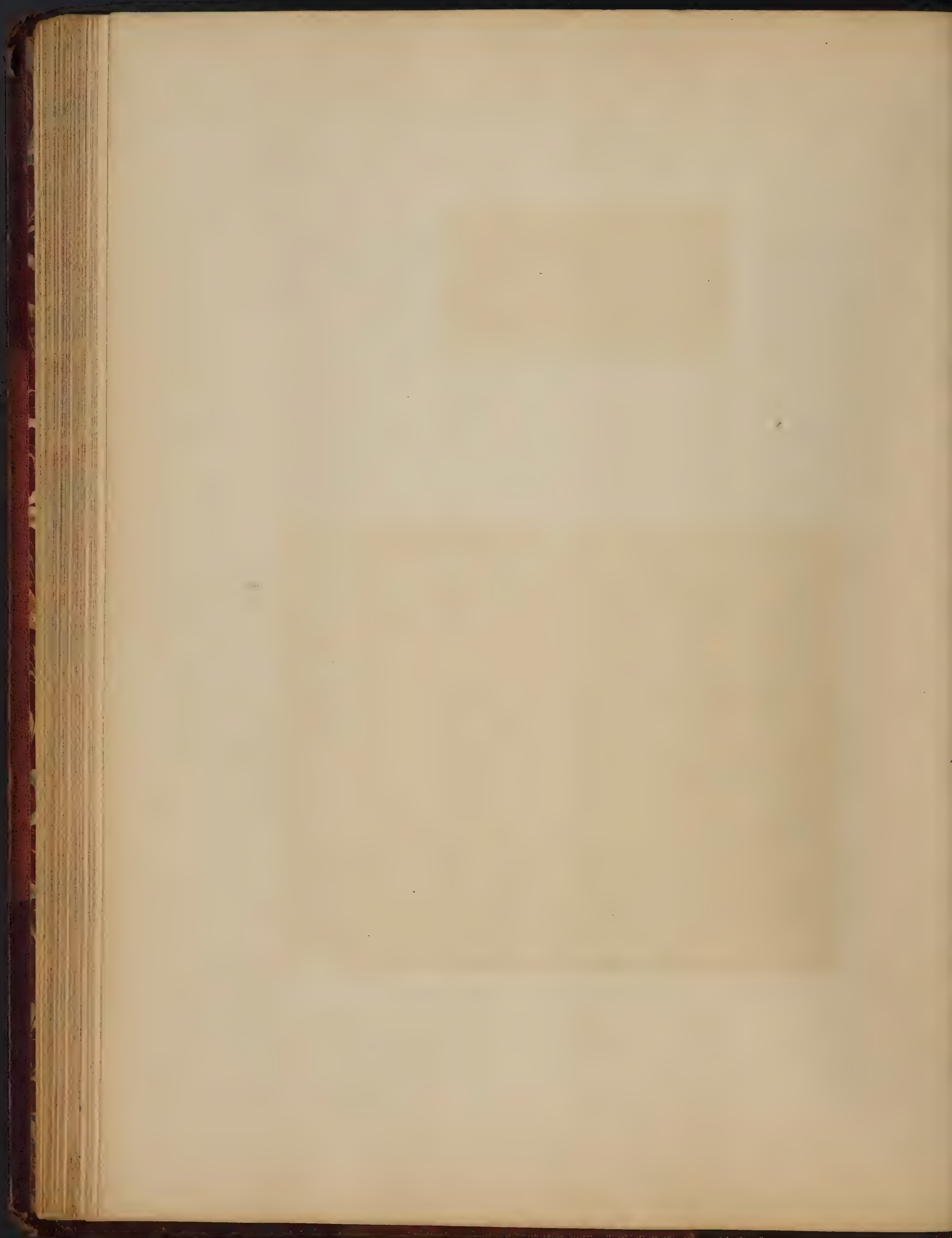
Dear Sir

You may see the date of the  
Lectures I submitted to you on such  
days in the Dublin Review as may  
be convenient. I have to return to  
Glasgow in November and I  
may be able to see you again  
about that time --

Yours faithfully  
Wm. Thackeray

Mr. B. Brown

Philosophical Institution  
Cambridge





We promised yesterday to reproduce a Scott letter belonging to the pawned batch. A comparison with the different specimens will at once show striking similarities. Observe the "you" at the beginning of the sham Thackeray with the "your" in the sham Scott. Note also the capital "S's" in the real Thackeray with the capital "S's" in the bogus one. Also note the "sir" in both the bogus Scott and the bogus Thackeray. Letters like this of Scott's seem to be obtainable by the hundredweight.

Further, it may be noted that all the letters and autographs in this album are represented to be those of deceased persons, so that no inconvenient questions might be addressed to the living.

Sunday 2 Sep.

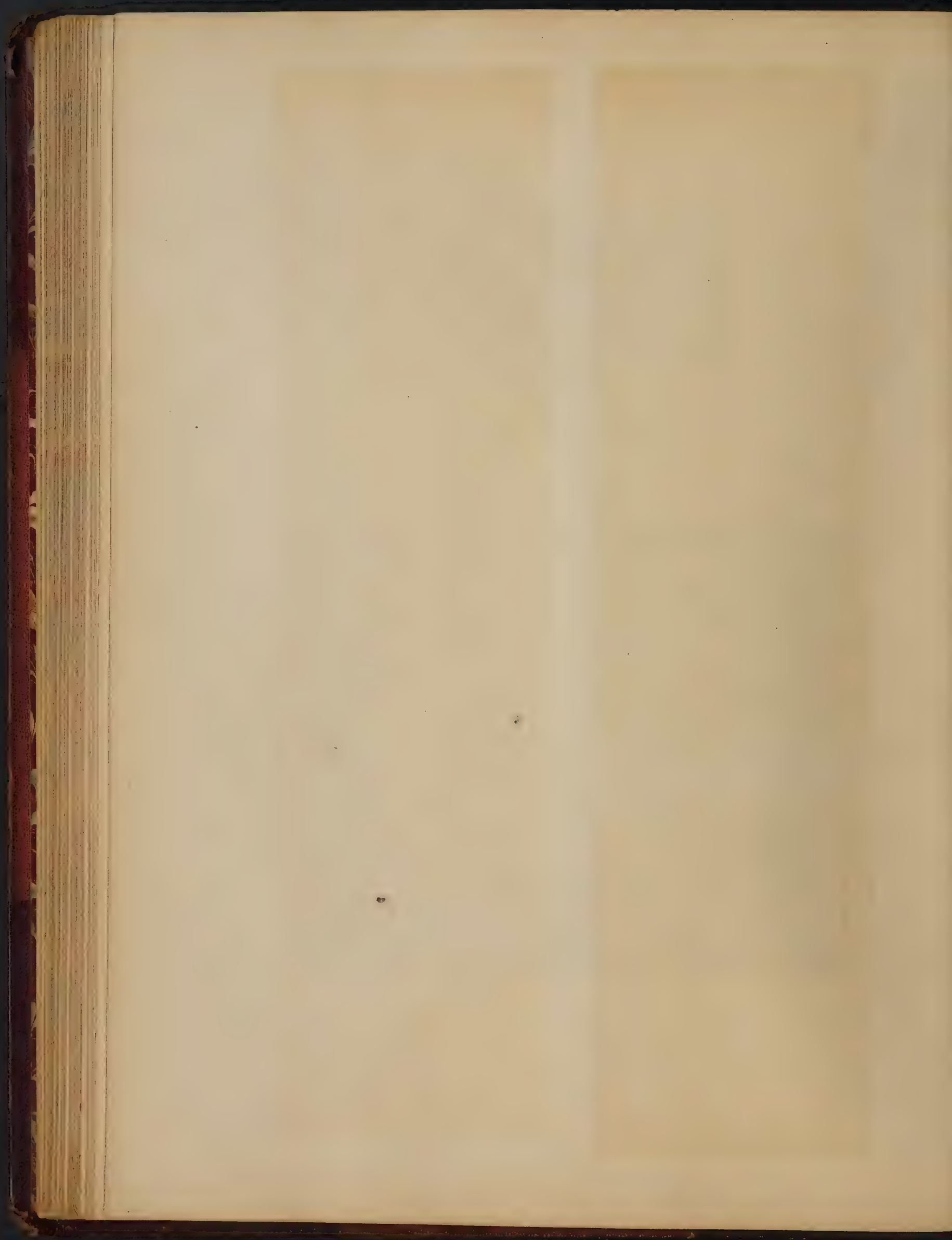
Arthur's letter reads a very agreeable appearance upon the breakfast table this morning which caused that apartment at 11 o'clock. I don't know how I was able to sleep so much but such was the fact - after a fine-birding hot day after idleness part of it was spent on the sofa, a little in the Tuller's garden. I made a sketch that is not a master piece but perhaps it is like

REAL THACKERAY LETTER, REPRODUCED FROM "SCRIBNER."

My dear Sir

Your letter came here this evening after my return to home from a little excursion. I have mails which I did to show you some more from the same I have been under lately - I am happy to

EXTRACT OF THE BOGUS SCOTT LETTER DESCRIBED YESTERDAY.





## THE PAWNBROKER REFUSES TO SPEAK.

YESTERDAY we made an appeal to the pawnbroker at whose sale the MSS. we referred to was disposed of, to assist us in further unravelling the mystery attendant on the great eruption of Burns, Scott, and Rebellion MSS. within the last few years. It has already been mentioned, and no mystery need now be made about it, that the MSS. in question were pawned with the Equitable Loan Company, Milne's Square, and it was at one of their quarterly sales they were purchased. The manager of that establishment, however, thought it to be his duty to decline to give any information on the subject. He declined to say when the sale took place, and he refused to allow our reporter to look at his catalogue of the sale. This is much to be regretted. We showed yesterday unmistakably that the person who pawned the MSS. and who wrote the doquets committed a gross fraud on the pawnbroker and subsequently on the public. He palmed off at least two MSS. upon him which were expressly stated to have been sold at the Whitefoord Mackenzie sale for certain sums of money, and which we showed were not at that sale at all; and the reporter wished to compare the pawnbroker's catalogue with the Whitefoord Mackenzie catalogue, in order to find out how many more MSS. had been marked in the same way from the Whitefoord Mackenzie collection. Reposing somewhere in the books of the Equitable Loan Company will be the name of the person who pawned the MSS.; but that the reporter did not venture to ask. That might very justly be regarded as a confidential secret. But the other information was—well, we would have thought, of a public nature! But it perhaps does not much matter. Evidence of this gigantic fraud pours in upon us in overwhelming volume, and, before we are done with it, the probability is that this and other information will be furnished from another quarter.

## THE WHITEFOORD MACKENZIE SALE.

We have to say a few words about the Whitefoord-Mackenzie sale, to which reference was made yesterday. It began at Chapman's on the 24th March 1886, and lasted nearly a month. The catalogue of that sale is now in our hands. Mr Whitefoord Mackenzie was a Writer to the Signet, and the catalogue speaks of his library as "one of the finest and most remarkable libraries which has been offered for sale in Scotland." Mr Mackenzie was a son of Dr Mackenzie, of Mauchline, who was contemporary with Burns, and who knew the poet well. The library consequently included some Burns relics; but the modern manufacture of relics had not begun in Mr Mackenzie's day, so that, although the Mackenzies were in direct touch with the poet, we find in the catalogue scarcely any of that "flotsam and jetsam" of Burns of which some Edinburgh booksellers and "collectors" hold such an immense stock. The Burns MSS. and autographs may be said to be comprised within the numbers of the catalogue 1089 to 1094, and being genuine and having a pedigree, they were sold at prices which suggest the exceeding unlikelihood of these treasures ever finding their way into pawn. Having the Whitefoord Mackenzie catalogue before us, we can now say at first hand what we stated confidently at second hand yesterday regarding the two Burns MSS. spoken of then—that they were not sold at the Whitefoord Mackenzie sale. We have diligently searched the catalogue, and they are not in it—neither the pretended tavern receipt, with the Whitefoord Mackenzie book-plate upon it, nor a pretended letter from "Ellisland, 19th January 1790," which is docketed "Whitefoord Mackenzie sale, paid £4, 11s." By the aid of the same catalogue we are also able to nail another spurious and false statement to the counter. One of the "Scott letters" sold at the Equitable sale is docketed "Interesting letter with poem annexed, 1 page quarto, 42s.; Whitefoord Mackenzie sale, £2, 2s." No such MS. appears in the Whitefoord Mackenzie catalogue, and no such MS. was sold at the sale. Yesterday we allowed that the little book by Robert Maxwell of Arkland on the improvement of glebes had really been at the sale in question, though sold for a sum nearer 1s. than the 23s. which it was stated in its fly-leaf had been paid for it at the Whitefoord Mackenzie sale. It also had the Mackenzie book-plate. We have carefully searched the catalogue, and cannot find it there; and in view of all we know regarding the person who doctored the Burns MS.

## A REQUEST TO MR STILLIE.

Mr Stillie wrote us yesterday on the subject of the MSS., and we venture to make a request to him to-day which he can hardly ignore. We stated yesterday that the person who pawned the MSS. had affixed in some cases on the covering sheets, in addition to his written docket, cuttings from catalogues. We specially referred to one MS. in this connection—viz., the "Rare proclamation by the Earl of Mar," of date 1715. We were rather curious to know where the printed cutting came from which is so ostentatiously pasted on the outside sheet. We happen to possess a catalogue of a sale which took place at Chapman's on the 23d November 1887, at which what were then supposed to be "a very important collection of letters and documents relating chiefly to the Jacobite Rebellion were disposed of." Concerning this sale we shall have more to say by and by. Where this crop of Jacobite papers came from may form a subject of subsequent inquiry. But in turning over the pages of this catalogue yesterday, by good-luck we lighted upon the counterpart of the identical cutting—page 9 of the catalogue, No. 109 of the sale—"Rebellion 1715. Mar (Earl of.) Proclamation, 1 p. folio, given at the camp at Perth the 1st of November 1715 to the Burrough of L'ithgow, signed Mar;" and then the first clause of the proclamation is recited. It was so important a clue that we had no hesitation in proceeding to Mr Chapman's to ask him if he had still his sale book, and if he would turn it up for the purpose of ascertaining who had purchased this document. Mr Chapman most courteously complied with our request. The document, he said, was sold publicly, and it would be known at the time who purchased it, and what price was paid for it. It appeared that Mr Stillie purchased it for £3, 10s. Now we hold this document, which, it is represented, is the identical document which Mr Stillie purchased at the sale in November 1887. Is it too much to ask Mr Stillie, in the circumstances:—

1. If he still holds the document he then purchased?
2. If he has not got it in his possession, who did he sell it to? and
3. If he does not care to state publicly who he sold it to, if it is sold, will he give us privately his client's name, so that we may trace its history from the time it left his hands until it found its way into the Equitable Loan Company's shelves?

Our theory in the meantime is that the MS. we hold is not the document purchased by Mr Stillie, though it pretends to be; and that the person who perpetrated the frauds on the pawnbroker with the two Burns MSS. forged this document also, and palmed it off as genuine with the aid of the catalogue cutting.

We have to apologise to the purchasers of the edition of yesterday's *Dispatch* for the first issue of the paper appearing without the plates reproducing the forged MSS. and the doquets on their covers. Through an unfortunate delay the plates could not be got ready in time, but they appeared in all the subsequent editions. One of the plates referred to—that on which it was intended to reproduce the doquet of the Scott letter, for the purpose of comparing it with the pretended signatures of Scott—had to be kept back altogether.

## NOTES

### ON MSS. OF BURNS POEMS.

1890. SEPTEMBER 18.

#### I.

"SCOTS WHA HAE."

A copy by Burns himself was purchased by Mr Kennedy, banker, New York, and presented to the city of Edinburgh in August last.

Appended to the song is a long note, also in the poet's hand, relating the story, well known, of the interview betwixt Bruce and Cummin at Dumfries.

The MS. was presented by the poet to Dr Hughes, of Hereford, and is signed "Robt. Burns." Dr Hughes visited Burns at Dumfries in August 1795, and on Saturday the 8th of that month was presented with the song.

Another copy of "Scots Wha Hae" is now (September 18) in the possession of Mr Stillie, bookseller, George Street. It is a copy by the author, headed "Bruce at Bannockburn." A note follows the title thus:—"Song sent to Mr Thomson for his collection, September." (Tune—Hey, tuttie taitu.) It is much more carefully written than that bought by Mr Kennedy. In Kennedy's copy, now in Edinburgh, the punctuation is decidedly slovenly, and shows that the document was penned in a hurry. In the third stanza of Stillie's copy the points of interrogation occur at the end of the three lines, but are absent in the other copy.







By the following note at the end, it may be seen how Burns had the notion, or conviction if you will, that his work was of a high order, and destined to last. Who the song was copied for is not known, but the note runs thus:—

"I send you a copy of the last song I have sent Mr Thomson, and I think that it is quite sufficient to do credit to the next performance of your club."

"ROBERT BURNS."

The copy was left in the Jerusalem Tavern at Dumfries in the winter of 1793-94.

It is worthy of note that in the Kennedy copy the poet, in writing out the copy, missed "dearest" in the third line of the fifth stanza, which he afterwards interlined. In the same copy there are no numbers to the verses, while Stillie's copy has them so.

If one were permitted a criticism of the condition of the bard, it would be not altogether irreverent to say that he was either half screwed, or in a hurry to get rid of Dr Hughes, when he penned the copy of his glorious song for him.

"TO CHLORIS ON HER ILLNESS."

This may be original MS. It is not addressed by note to any person, but it is signed in the poet's best "auto," and written throughout with evident care. It is dated May 1795.

"THE WOUNDED HARE."

This is dated at the foot of the page "April 1789." Preceding the song is this characteristic note:—

"Sent to Mr Alexander Cunningham, and also to Dr Gregory, which latter gentleman thoroughly condemned it."

"ROBT. BURNS."

This MS. was examined by James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, who has signed it on the back. It is beautifully written in the poet's usual hand—the never-varying hand!

"SONG TO ELIZA."

Dated July 1786. Different paper from preceding poems. As to the paper on which this and the other songs referred to here are written, it may be mentioned that an attempt to clean them by washing has not been so desirably successful as to make one wish to repeat the experiment. It (the song) is signed, and Hogg has again put his mark upon its back.

"THE DUMFRIES VOLUNTEERS."

Beautifully written, upon paper same as first mentioned. It has "for Mr Maxwell," and there are two stanzas on each page—viz., 1 and 2—and signed at the end "Robt. Burns." It was sent to Mr Maxwell in 1795. James Hogg examined it, and left his name upon it.

"ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD."

As fresh as when it left the writer's hand. The sight of it is quite enough to make one love the writer. With all thy faults, my country's bard, thou art high above the men we hear speak of thee in these days, and of thy loves and failings. Thy truly human heart comes out here in the fire clouds of sorrow. Added is this note:—

"In recollection of Elizabeth, my dear daughter, I penned these lines."

"ROBT. BURNS."

"WHY, YE TENANTS OF THE LAKE."

"Lines written at Oughtertyre on scaring some birds at Loch Tarit."

"ROBT. BURNS, 1787."

In the 16th line "mankind" is deleted, and "beside" substituted. The poem is written on blue quarto paper. At the end is—

"Sent to Sir William Murray.—"ROBT. BURNS."

N.B.—Two auto. sigs. appear on this one piece (?).

"MY WIFE'S A WINSOME WEE THING."

Nicely written on usual small folio or imperial 8vo paper. The stanzas are not numbered, and the heading says—

"For Mr Thomson, sent November 1792."

This was the property of Miss Arthur. Hogg examined and signed it in 1833.

"MARY MORRISON."

The usual good bold hand. Stanzas numbered. The second last line had at first "thocht." The last three letters he deleted, and substituted "ught."

"Sent to M——"

"ROBT. BURNS."

This MS. copy was the property of Miss Leslie, Ayr, and was sent to Glasgow in 1833, where Hogg examined it on the 15th July, and signed his name on the back.

"A SONG."

"When I upon thy bosom lie" has "For Mr Thomson," and evidently written with a pen thicker in the point than usual. In the seventh line of the first

stanza "not" is omitted. The line runs "Even years shall destroy our love." Instead of signing at the foot of the last stanza on the second page a blank is left, and at the foot of the page occurs the following note:—

"I think that the above deserves preservation in your volumes."

"ROBT. BURNS."

It is quite evident that this is the original copy sent to Thomson for the volumes he was then publishing. It became the property of Miss Arthur, and in August 1833 James Hogg signs it as having examined it. It is backed as No. 90. Who had the 90? And where did Stillie get those? It will come out some day.

"MENIE."

Stillie evidently thought this was "Menu," and has it backed so. The seven stanzas numbered, or rather 2 to 7, and signed "Robt. Burns." It was examined and signed by Hogg, and was the property of Mr Johnston, Annan, in 1803. It is numbered "Johnston 39."

"BONNIE WEE THING; CANNIE WEE THING."

Song sent to Miss D—— and also to Captain Rid-dell. Two stanzas not numbered, but written in good hand. At the foot of the first page is:—

"For Miss Laurie from Robt. Burns." On the back is, "purchased from her 1809." It also was examined by James Hogg.

The backing of these MSS. is, I am tempted to say, in the writing of Sir Walter Scott. Who more likely in 1809 to have purchased this MS. for Miss Laurie?

"A long note to 'SCOTS WHA HAE' is like Sir Walter's hand. Indeed, Professor Masson, who looked over the MSS., to-day (18th September) thinks it is Sir Walter's. The composition is not worthy of him however. This is the note.

"I have been unable to discover to which club it is that is referred to by Burns. The MS., I understood from Mrs Millar, who gave it me, that it was left by some one in the Jerusalem Tavern, Dumfries, in the winter of 1793-4.—W. S."

"POEM TO THE GOWAN."

Sent to Kennedy 20th April 1786—nicely written; stanzas not numbered. Takes three pages of the ordinary paper. Has at the end:—

"Mr Haig, from his unhappy friend,

"ROBT. BURNS."

The owner backed it thus:—

"This was sent to Mr Haig, one of the poet's intimate friends. I received his MS. from him on certain conditions, along with many others."

James Hogg examined it and signed it.

"JOHN ANDERSON, MY JO"

"Song sent to Mr Haig and others in Kilmarnock. Two stanzas. Strange to say, in the second line of the second verse this MS. has "hills," not "hill"—probably an error in copying the song. The former vulgarises the song, and kills the sentiment of the proper version. Burns at the foot of the page writes:—

"Taken from the old song in the Reliques."

"ROBT. BURNS."

"Percy's Reliques" are those here referred to. Owner backed it.

"JOHN ANDERSON, MY JO, JOHN,"

with note by Burns regarding whence he had it:—

"From the bundle given me by Mrs Miller, Dumfries, 1801."

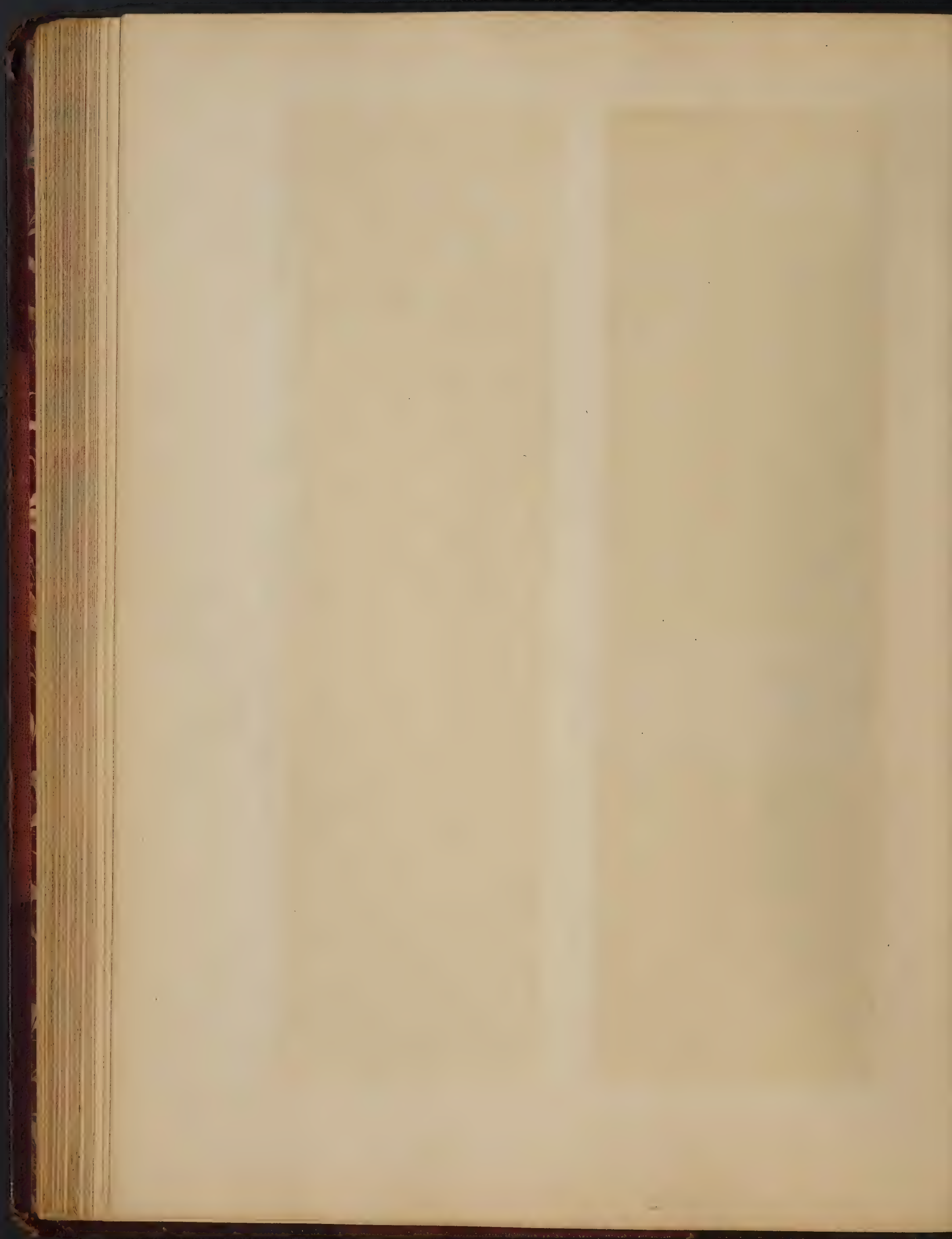
"SUMMER'S A PLEASANT TIME."

Three stanzas, numbered, and signed "Robt. Burns," backed from Mrs Miller, Dumfries (51 m.)

This completes the Burns MS. in one bundle. In another of miscellaneous MSS. is Burns' letter to Miss Kennedy, dated Mauchline, March 1788.

These MSS. have been purchased by Mr Kennedy, already referred to. He is a New York banker, and president of the Lennox Library there, to which institution he is said to intend to present the MSS. It is somewhat sad to find that so many of the interesting relics of our country find their way to the other side of the Atlantic. After all, if the process knits the American States closer in feeling and in common bonds of literary interest, so much the better for us, for them, and for the world.

[We may deal with this miscellaneous lot at a later stage.]





# SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT.

This day, 18th November 1892, Mr Andrew Tod, cousin to Mr John Kennedy, banker, New York, who was concerned in the action as to his purchase of Murthly, more than a year ago, called upon me this morning in regard to some Burns MSS. offered for sale by Mr Stillie, bookseller, George Street, who was the vendor of the parcel of MSS. referred to in these pages, which I hurriedly penned in September 1890.

Somewhat singularly, in a few months after I made these jottings, it was found that a very large number of Burns MSS. were "floating" in the city. That they were not genuine was the feeling of those who examined them. One of our newspapers, the *Evening Dispatch*, made an effort to get at the source from which these MSS. seem to come, but, as yet, without being successful. From time to time one heard that another batch of Burns MSS. was unearthed, but when this was probed somewhat, it usually led to one seeming source, of which those who had suspicions spoke only with bated breath. "I know" and "Don't you know?" were expressions not infrequently met with. Two or three, or perhaps four years ago, a number of MSS. came upon the market, and not a few were, to put it mildly, "gulled" on the occasion. A bookseller in Bristo Place (Mr Brown) was known to have come by a large number by some means or other. These were not confined entirely to those of Burns, but included those of famous men and women in Scotland. The story which was circulated most industriously and received most credence was that the trusted head clerk of a firm of lawyers in the town had had these entrusted to him for safe keeping; that the said firm (the name was never given, so far as I remember) had been dissolved, and that both partners were dead, as well as the confidential head clerk; that the widow and family of the latter coming to realise how precious an inheritance had been left them, and considering that they were not transgressing any law, seeing that all the original parties were dead, offered them to Mr Brown for sale. Mr Brown was pressed again and again for the name of the party from whom the MSS. came to him, and the end of this inquiry seemed to be that Mr Brown had really never had any dealings with the parties, but that the MSS. had come through (name omitted.) Not only Burns, but a Scott document could be got for a trifle comparatively. Low prices roused suspicion, as was the case when Mr Mackenzie's collection was exposed for sale at Dowell's. Mr Stillie, bookseller, has had a number of these MSS. through his hands. Still, it must be felt that there is something peculiar about the affair.

Quite recently I had the advantage of a conversation with Mr Mackenzie, Forrest Road, to whom I sent a letter I had from Mr Elliot Stock, publisher, London, offering a chair made from the flooring of Burns' Dumfries house. Nothing could be more satisfactory than the manner in which Mr Mackenzie insisted on Mr Stock submitting indubitable proof that what he offered for sale was *bona fide*. Speaking of the copy of "Scots Wha Hae" now in the possession of the town authorities, I mentioned that it was very curious how so many Burns MSS. claimed connection with Dumfries, and how I really suspected the MSS. of that song sold to Mr Kennedy, on account of its being said to have been left in the Jerusalem Tavern, Dumfries. Mr Mackenzie agreed with me that the copy in the town's possession is poor, and that the one Mr Stillie sold to Mr Kennedy was much superior to it in point of execution.

Mr Mackenzie did me the favour to show me quite a bundle of Burns MSS. which he had in his coat pocket.

## SPECIMENS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

51 George Street, Edinburgh.

SIR,—I can supply you letters, of which I send specimens, from the following list in the quantities stated from the Edinburgh Factory. When I say they were purchased at different periods, at prices based on what the same autographs brought in a London sale-room, according to the enclosed priced catalogue, you will have some idea of what my autograph-craze has cost me. In short, I paid catalogue price, less 12 per cent., which would allow for auction fees. On submitting them to London experts I found them to be forgeries. They may be had as curiosities—not as autographs.—I am, &c.

E. C. MALONEY.

SPECIMENS.	
Abercrombie.....	2
Burns.....	3
Burke.....	1
Cromwell.....	1
Prince Charles.....	1
Coleridge.....	1
Collingwood.....	2
Carlyle.....	3
Edgeworth.....	1
Gwynne.....	2
David Hume.....	1
James Hogg.....	1
Hemans.....	1
Mary Queen of Scots.....	1
George Monck.....	2
Montrose.....	1
Nelson and Brontë.....	3
Pitt.....	1
Scott.....	3
Southey.....	2
Thackeray.....	2

## THE BUSINESS IN LONDON.

One of our London reporters, having been requested by us to make certain inquiries, writes:—

London, November 25, 1892.

Dear Sir,—I have seen Sotheby and Pearson's people about the forged MSS.

Mr Hodge, jr., of Sotheby's, told me they have had a large quantity of MSS., principally Burns', during the past two years, and only a few weeks ago he had two parcels, one containing about a dozen and the other three or four Burns' MSS. On examination they were all found to be forgeries, and they were all done by the same hand. Mr Hodge thought some of the forgeries very clever, but not sufficiently clever to prevent detection. These MSS. come to them from all parts of the country—England, Scotland, and Ireland. Many of them are from people who have been themselves deluded. They cannot say that any have come from a source they have reason to suspect as the fountain-head of the forgers, or they would take steps to lay the guilty party by the heels, as these forgeries are destroying the value of legitimate MSS. of all kinds.

Mr Pearson has had no forged MSS. sent him for about two years. The last parcel came by post from Edinburgh. It contained MSS. from the Jacobite period down to and including Dickens. Not a single one of the MSS. in the bundle was genuine. They were all done by one hand, and done badly. Pearson's people think the Burns and Scott forgeries, so far as they have come under their observation, very clumsy and badly done. They cannot conceive how any one could be deceived by them. They also would be glad if the forger could be unearthed. They told me that perhaps a certain bookseller in Edinburgh [we omit name] might be able to throw some light on the matter.

## ANOTHER VICTIM.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

Edinburgh, November 25, 1892.

SIR,—I have been much interested reading your articles on the subject of forged MSS., autographs, &c. My object in writing you may be briefly stated:—Two years ago I purchased at a sale of unredeemed pledges in the Equitable Loan Company's Salerooms an album containing what purported to be a letter by Thackeray, one of Southey's, two of Sir R. Peel's, a discharged receipt granted and written by Sir W. Scott, portion of 13th Century MSS., fully a dozen autographs of Sir W. Scott, nearly the same number of Mr Gladstone, one of John Bright, Marquis of Salisbury, autographs of several of the leaders of the Jacobite Rebellion; naval and military heroes, including Nelson, Abercrombie, Collingwood, &c. &c.; also a letter, dated 1708, written by Lord Southesk; and I bought the album as a matter of curiosity, and paid a fairly large sum of money for it. Shortly after buying it I called one evening on a bookseller and asked him to look at the various MSS., &c. He evidently thought I wanted to sell it, and dismissed me with a curt "Not buying anything in that line just now."

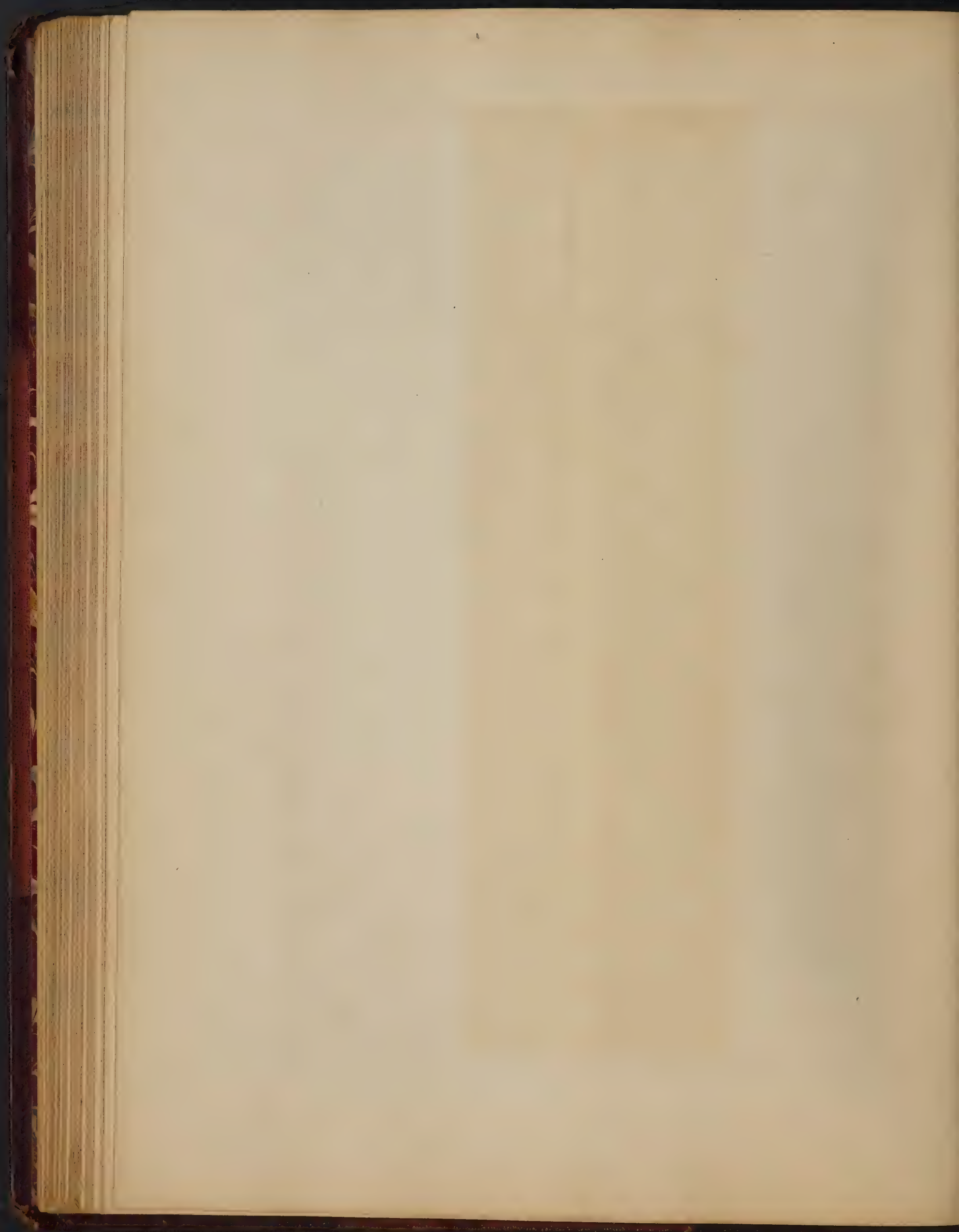
The album has been in my possession ever since. Your articles have quickened my interest in the said album, and it is at your service.—I am, &c. J. L.

P.S.—All the autographs, MSS., &c., have a price in lead pencil attached to them. The said marks were there when the album was bought.

## THEY MUST SPEAK OUT.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

SIR,—While the series of articles at present appearing in your columns are of the greatest interest to the literary world and the public generally, and while their revelations are such as to cause surprise to many people, yet there are also many to whom their contents will only confirm previous suspicions. The service which you are, however, rendering in taking up the matter in the strong and marked manner which characterises these articles



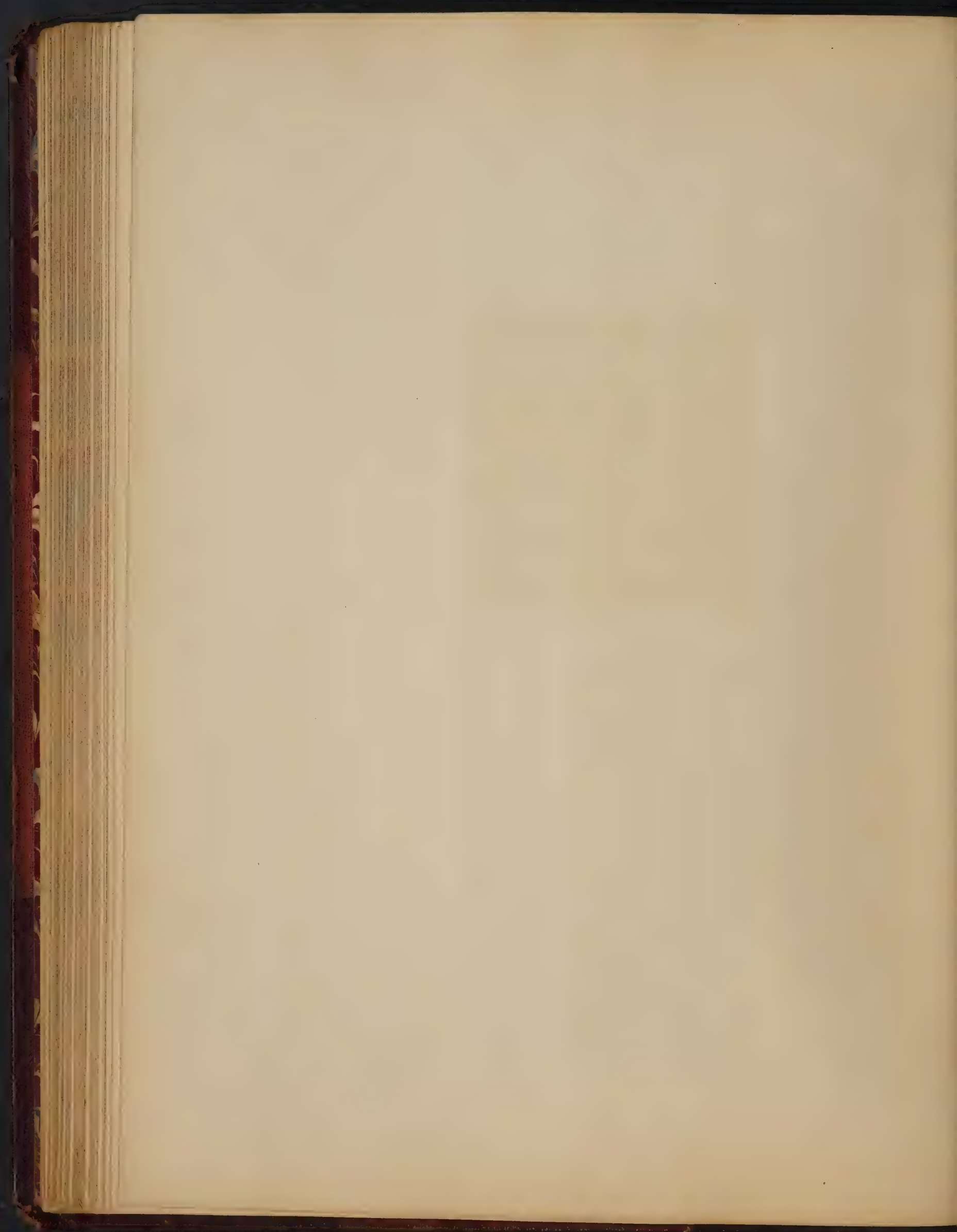


cannot be underrated, as the interests involved are of the greatest consequence, not only as regards the points to which particular attention is being directed, but to literature generally. I do not propose to discuss the details which you give as the result of your labours in endeavouring to expose the gross frauds understood to have been perpetrated in our midst by the production of ancient manuscripts foisted on a somewhat credulous public, particularly with reference to so-called original manuscripts of Burns. So much is associated with the name of Burns in our Scottish ideals, that anything which can be proved as having emanated from his pen has practically attained a sacred value, and it is more than time that some effort should be made to lay bare the frauds referred to. It must be, and have been for some considerable time back, evident to the veriest amateur collector or student of manuscripts that the great mass of those purporting to be ancient and genuine manuscripts of Burns or other authors, for many reasons, could never have had any existence except as productions of recent times, and therefore spurious. In connection with the matter, however, we cannot but remark the extraordinary and anomalous position taken up by Mr Mackenzie, who has been instrumental in throwing a great quantity of so-called genuine manuscripts into the market from time to time within recent years. The calls which have been made upon him appear so reasonable that it is difficult to understand why he should refuse to fall in with them, and, while he cannot imagine for a moment, from what has passed on the subject, that the public will rest satisfied with his action, he must have some reason for it. In fact, while many will incline to place Mr Mackenzie's claim as an amateur judge of the genuineness of manuscript at a low estimate, that position will raise in many minds questions of a nature which he may, as yet, have failed to appreciate. Mr Mackenzie has obtained manuscript documents of one kind or another, purporting to be genuine productions, from some source or sources which he declines to disclose. By disclosing the facts, he would not only be doing himself justice, but would also be doing a service to the public; otherwise, the converse, of course, is the natural and inevitable result. It is not quite enough simply to say that he and his authorities are satisfied as to the genuineness of particular documents. If they are genuine, there can be no reason whatever to fear or face the judgment of the best authority that can be got; while, on the other hand, if they are spurious, there is every reason why they should be promptly and authoritatively stamped as such. The actual result, as they now stand, is that, at best, they bear the brand of suspicion, and will be treated accordingly, a fate which will unfortunately meet many other documents genuine enough in themselves and which ought to be highly valued and carefully treasured up.

Apart from the questions affecting manuscript of Burns and the like, I may point out that there are ways by which documents of great interest and value may reach the light of day after having remained out of sight for many years—indeed, probably not known to exist, until, by various means, they have got into the market almost unobserved at the time. In many lawyers' offices in this city there are stowed in hidden corners, covered by the dust of ages it may be, many old charter boxes, the contents of which are unknown to their custodiers, and which are probably regarded as so much rubbish and waste paper. These may have passed from generation to generation of practitioners, who have never had their curiosity whetted enough to look into them. There, doubtless, still lie concealed many documents interesting and valuable in many respects, but, if the truth were known, perhaps it would be found that some one else has purloined from these forgotten receptacles many documents now in the hands of strangers. So, in like manner, we might discover how some of the material (such as antique paper, &c.) for the production of spurious documents has been obtained.

Meantime we are left face to face with the serious and important question as to how, where, and from whom certain collectors from time to time obtained their so-called genuine manuscripts? The question demands an answer, and will sooner or later have to be answered.—I am, &c.

LEX.





## Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.

EDINBURGH, MONDAY, November 28, 1892.

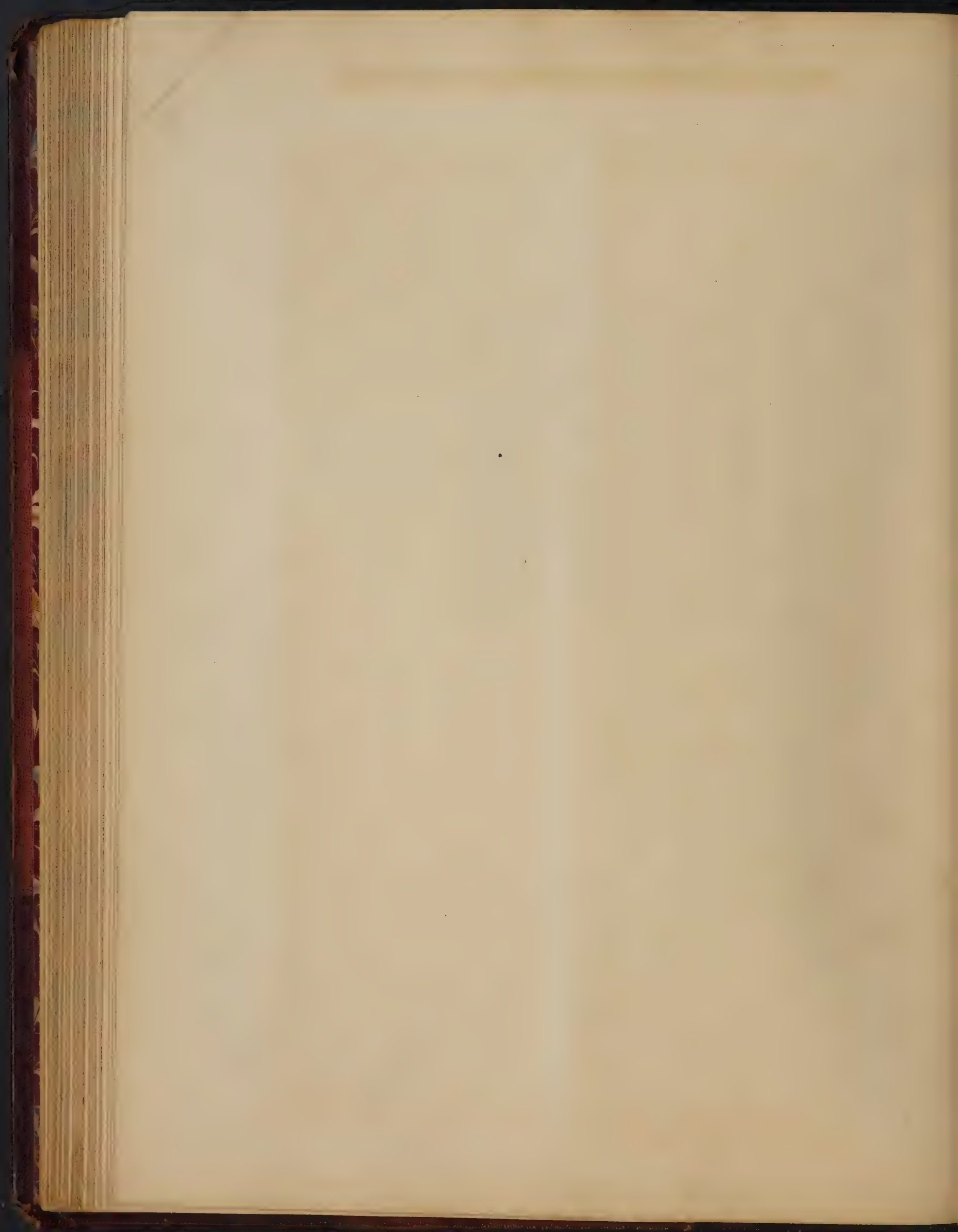
MR CRAIBE ANGUS, of Glasgow, tells a remarkable story to-day about some of the mysterious MSS.

WHEN he and Mr Colvill-Scott called on Mr Mackenzie, the latter, when pressed, stated that he had found them in a secret drawer of an old cabinet.

A CORRESPONDENT to-day tells how Smith was in the habit of buying old English printed folios and works bound in vellum.

HIS explanation was that he was a designer for devices on book covers in a famous publishing firm—though he did not always adhere to the same story.

IT turns out that Smith was also accustomed to paint pictures and exhibit forged signatures thereto.





## THE GREAT FORGERIES.

### THE MYSTERY OF AN "OLD CABINET."

#### THE MSS. EJECTED FROM A "SECRET DRAWER."

Out of the mass of correspondence, manuscripts, books, and other matters, which have reached us in reference to the MSS. forgeries, we can only select and, in the limited time at our disposal this morning, deal with a few. Of the manuscripts, we may say that there is a family likeness between them which there is no mistaking. But from pronouncing a private opinion as to the genuineness or otherwise of documents or collections sent by correspondents we must be excused. We profess to no special knowledge to qualify us for such work. What we have done has been to accept the views of gentlemen whom we believe to be among the highest, if not the very highest, authorities on MSS., and to be guided by their judgment. Private collectors must necessarily pursue the same course. The result of our investigations we have given and still intend further to give in all good faith to the public, taking due care to publish nothing that we cannot substantiate.

As would be seen from our Saturday's issue, we have traced the forgeries to a man named Smith. This fact we may say has been no secret for a long time. It is no discovery of ours. It was communicated to us a couple of years ago, but so plausible were the stories of his defenders, and emphatic the asseverations of those gentlemen, who, like Mr Stillie, indignantly denied the existence of forgeries, that for lack of proof we maintained silence. For sometime past, however, these proofs began to accumulate; various hints reached us, and the story of the business is now pretty complete, and we purpose giving it when the few remaining links are supplied.

In the meantime, we may mention that Smith did not confine his practised hand to manuscripts and books. He also painted, and was in the habit of signing his works—not, however, with the name of Smith. But more of this by and by in the romantic story.

The chief contribution which we give to-day is one from Mr Craibe Angus, of Glasgow, a gentleman to whom more than to anybody else the exposure of these infamous forgeries is due. He it was who spurred us up occasionally to inquire into the subject, and he it was who nailed the spurious Hill letter to the desk. His letter to-day is of a truly remarkable character. For the first time a Mysterious Cabinet is introduced. Mr Craibe Angus and Mr Colvill-Scott, accepting the newspaper invitation of Mr Mackenzie, called upon him in order to inspect his treasures. They did not discover that Mr Mackenzie was so pleased to see them as zealous collectors are wont to welcome fellow enthusiasts. Of course this frigid reception may have been due to the well-known difference of opinion which existed between them. The real interest of Mr Angus' narrative, however, lies in the Cabinet. Mr Mackenzie stated to these two well-known gentlemen that he discovered a batch of documents in a secret drawer in this cabinet. Here is quite a new development which we had not expected. We do not indeed know what to think of it—it is altogether so startling. Of course this cabinet will be in existence, and equally of course it will have a history. Until this cabinet and this history and all the attendant circumstances are produced or explained it would be obviously indecorous to say anything.

### REMARKABLE STORY OF A MYSTERIOUS CABINET.

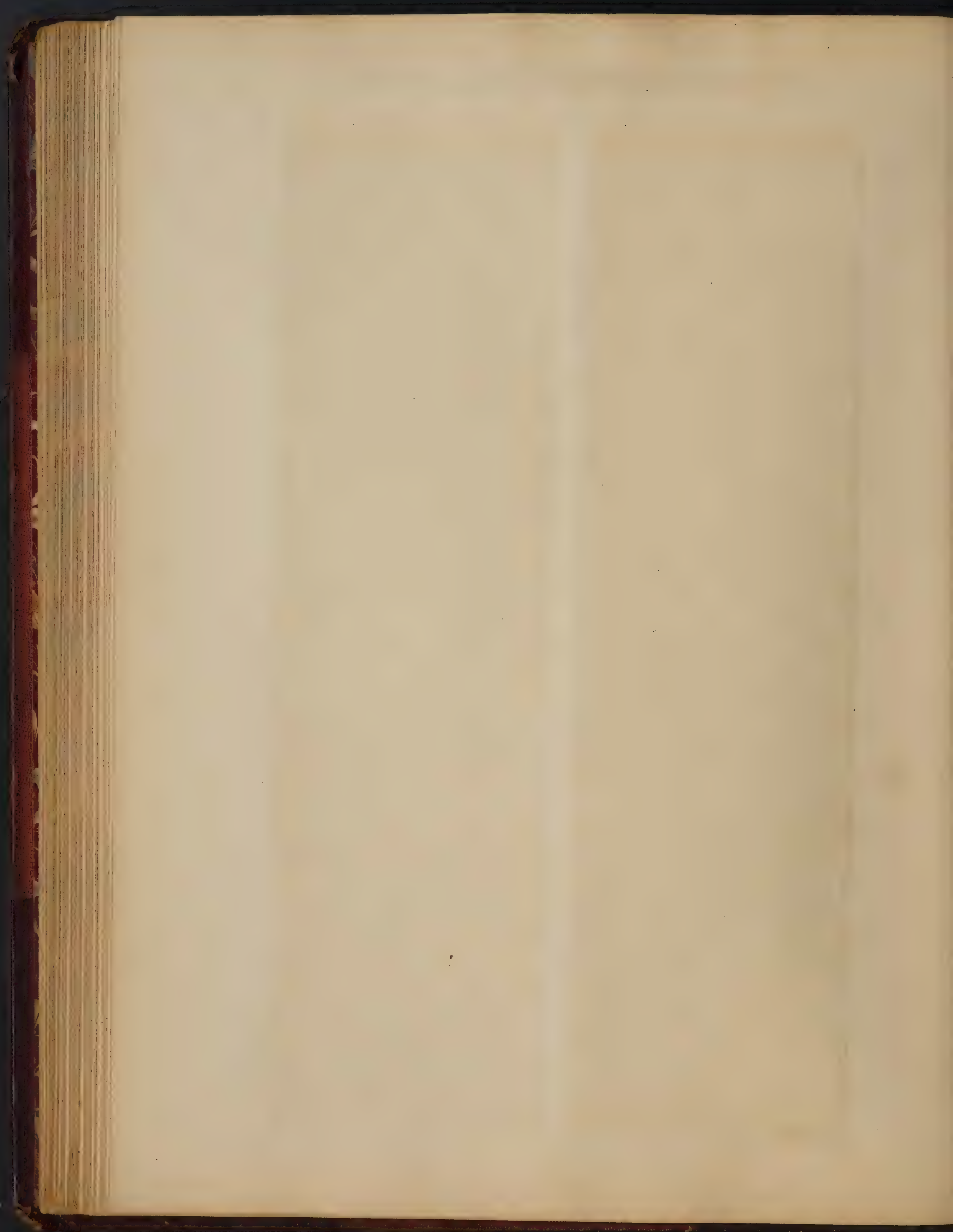
[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."] Glasgow, November 26, 1892.

SIR,—As secretary, *pro tem.*, for the forthcoming Burns Exhibition in Glasgow (which is intended to celebrate the centenary of the poet's death), I have come to know not a few of the inner circle which may be said to constitute the Burns cult. As the Exhibition will consist mainly of relics of the poet—MSS., portraits—painted and engraved illustrations of his works and what has come to be known as the Land of Burns, the leading editions of his works, &c., my correspondence has necessarily been with the holders of these. Such in not a few families are heirlooms, held as national possessions to be freely lent so that the Exhibition may be an event of historic importance. From these, the one question has been, how will our property when on exhibition be protected from injury? And so with those also who in the long ago had purchased Burnsiana items. All, so far, has been smooth sailing.

But, unfortunately, there is another class, those who, from the very best of motives, have recently purchased what they believed were MSS. of Burns, or books containing his autograph, and from whom come questions of a very different kind. Who is the proper party to value a Burns MS.? Would you give your opinion upon a MS. if I send it to you? Do you know any one who might be inclined to purchase a book which formed part of the library of Burns? And so on. In this way I came to know of the existence of spurious documents—all recent, and all emanating from the same persons. So early as 18—(date omitted by Mr Angus) I had seen in bookshops spurious Burns MSS., and before I had heard of their existence. Something like a cold shiver passed through me when I saw the first batch. I instinctively pronounced them false, and after a lively ten minutes had to beat a hasty retreat. I attach no moral blame to the bookseller, who, without any antecedent experience, was on account of their cheapness induced to buy them. A spurious Burns MS., he said, and said truly, had not been heard of; and was my opinion to upset the received opinion of the trade? But I blame him for not having the MSS., after they had been challenged, and before any one of them had been sold, submitted to a competent judge. Some—the residuum—he sent to a London auction room were returned as "false." It was not till then that he dismounted from his high horse, but to his credit be it said, that neither the Smiths nor the rest of the pack could induce him by low quotations to buy another lot of what they called "MSS. of the masterpieces of the poet."

Since then I have seen spurious MSS. of Burns in Newcastle, Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, and London; and so I was not altogether unprepared for the revelations you have made. Sooner or later exposure was certain; and it is a great relief to the promoters of the Burns' Exhibition that you have simplified their work by the firm, well-timed, and thorough exposure you are making of the forger and his accomplices and dupes. We hope that all those who have been their victims will in some direct way co-operate with you in the present inquiry, so that the public may be safeguarded against them in the future.

A word as to the detection of spurious MSS. It is difficult to say how an experienced eye comes to know the true from the false. By closer observation, one's knowledge resolves itself into an instinct that acts almost intuitively. This gift can only be acquired by experience; but any ordinary observer accustomed to the close examination of such surfaces as (say) the abraded plumage of a bird, or the broken bloom of the wing of a butterfly, would readily suspect that something was wrong with the spotty, raw, textureless counterfeits that we are asked to accept as belonging to the Rebellion period, or as having been written by Burns or Scott. Being less artistic than that of Burns, the caligraphy of Scott is more easily imitated; and the imitations or forgeries credited to Smith have now and again, in individual letters, at least, a wonderful resemblance even to those of Burns. The forgeries fail more in general appearance than in detail. They are formal, stiff, cramped, and wanting the free, easy movement that seems inseparable from the heroic hand of Burns.





My relation to the controversy in the *Cummock Express* came about in this way. Happening to be in Cummock, and having received important information relating to Burns from Mr Todd, who is known to the Burns cult by his books, and to a still wider circle by his Holy Willie letters which appeared in the *Scotsman*, I visited Mr Todd, who is at once the embodiment and exponent of the traditions of Burns and his times. In the course of our conversation he told me that Mr Mackenzie, an Edinburgh collector, had sent him an unpublished letter by Burns to John Hill, a Cummock weaver, and that he was making inquiries of the oldest inhabitants as to any gossip that might still linger regarding him. Mr Mackenzie's name having been so frequently mentioned in relation to bogus MSS., I thought here was a chance of testing a sample of the unique collection of unpublished MSS. attributed to Burns which the "F.S.A." collector is said to have acquired. With this view, I suggested to Mr Todd that if he published the letter in the *Express*, he might get the desired information; but I added that I strongly doubted the existence of any important MSS. of Burns that had not been published; and that in Edinburgh there was a manufactory of spurious MSS., and that the "John Hill" letter was probably one of them. When I said I should like to test the genuineness of the letter, Mr Todd replied that he would ask permission to publish the letter in the *Express*, and if permission was granted he would send me the paper, which would be open for any comments I might have to make on the letter. I agreed, *con amore*, to write as a correspondent, which I did. But I had no wish or thought of concealing my identity; and Mr Todd, very properly, informed Mr Mackenzie that I was the writer. Nor was I much concerned at Mr Todd's taking the side of Mr Mackenzie against me in the correspondence, although he might have allowed us to discuss the matter in our several ways. But, in any case, he would have been wise to have consulted his three competent orthographers before committing his paper and himself to the genuineness of the bogus documents. From Mr Todd's point of view, Mr Mackenzie's letters, containing as they do so much unpublished matter by Burns, might have been allowed to go on. They were entirely to my satisfaction, if they were "uninteresting" to him. But I do complain of him for giving colour to Mr Mackenzie's insinuation that the British Museum, or the Antiquarian Museum in Edinburgh, would for a moment be unjustly swayed, one way or another, in any judgment they might give on a matter of the kind. I had put Mr Mackenzie in a dilemma. He was fighting with the odds of the truth against him; and where, oh! where, may I ask Mr Todd, is he now, when Mr Stronach has shown that the "Poor Man's Prayer" could not by any possibility have been written by Burns?

When all the birds have got their own,  
And every stolen feather flown,  
How mean the jackdaw looks.

A word in conclusion as to Mr Mackenzie. Along with two gentlemen—Mr Colvill-Scott, whose letters you have published, and Mr Andrew Gibson of Bel-

fast, two gentlemen who know their Burns down to the roots—I called upon Mr Mackenzie. We told him that we had called to see the Burns MSS., which in his letters in the *Cummock Express* he had invited the public to see; we told him who we were; and on his complaining of my having condemned a letter I had not seen, I replied that I had not said anything about the "penmanship" of the letter, and that my strictures were confined to the matter of the letter, which I could not accept as being the outcome of the brain of the poet. I promised that if he would show me that any of my statements were exaggerated or unfair, I should withdraw them over my own name in the first issue of the *Express*. On referring to the letters, he took exception to my having called him the "dupe" of the forger. I replied that I had no other alternative. I knew he was not the forger, and I would not believe that he was his willing accomplice. He refused to show the MSS., on the ground that I was a "dealer." I told him that I was a collector of books relating to Burns, but that dealing in Burns MSS. could not be said to be a department in the business of my firm. Not having been favourably impressed with the answers and conversation of Mr Mackenzie, I said I should bid him good-bye, and write to the *Express* to say that he had refused to show me the MSS. he had invited the public to see.

After much hesitation and haggling, he said the MSS. were at his house, and that he could not show them that day. We asked him to fix a day when we

could see them, and he named the following Tuesday, thinking, possibly, that my friends, who were on a holiday, could not be present on the day named. I asked him no questions myself, but my friends did. He refused to tell where he got the MSS., or in whose possession they had been previous to their coming into his hands, further than to say that he was a "collector"—a collector of everything—a big order—and that an old cabinet, the style of which he did not like, had been brought to him, and that, thinking there might be some hid-away treasure in some secret drawer, he purchased it. And he told us how, on touching a spring, a bundle of MSS., as if by magic, were ejected from their long hiding.

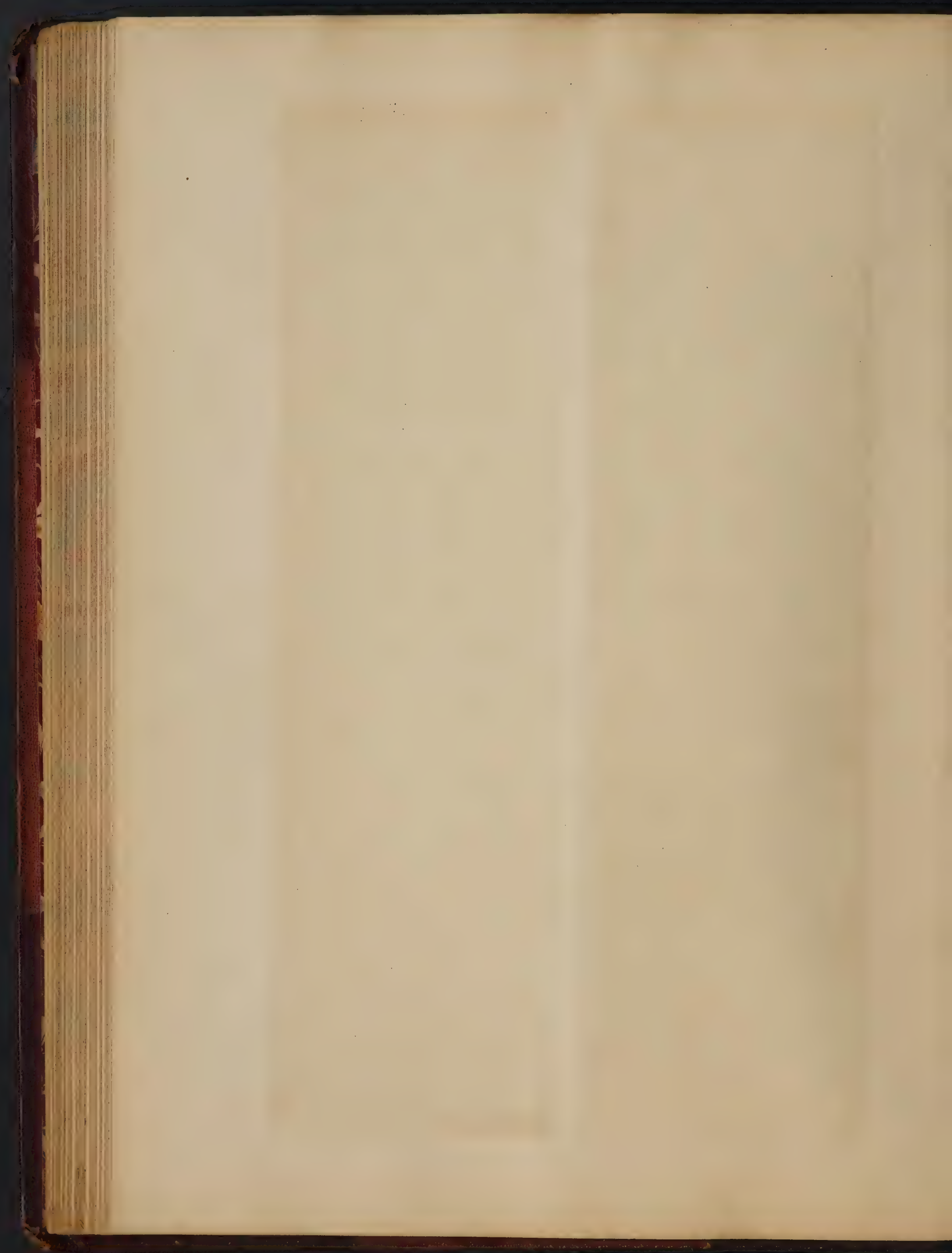
On the question being raised whether, under the circumstances, the MSS. were his property or that of the late owner of the cabinet, and why he had not communicated the knowledge of his "find" to some learned society or the *Scotsman*, he beat about the bush and would not come to the point. He further told us that he had in a book an unpublished poem in the autograph of the poet which was gifted to him by one of the sons of Burns. On my remarking that such a gift was a show book for ever, he said that the poem was rather "free," and that for that reason he could not show it. On his repeating the statement in one of his letters that he had not seen a spurious Burns MS., and that he did not believe in their existence, we undertook to borrow examples and show them to him on Tuesday, which we did. Mr Gibson could not be with us, but Mr Colvill-Scott and myself waited on him as arranged. We were late, having been detained in the borrowing of the spurious MSS., which two most respectable firms in Edinburgh, knowing our object, kindly placed at our disposal. We explained to Mr Mackenzie the cause of our being late for our appointment. He demurred to showing us the documents at that late hour, but he relented, and showed us the MSS. named in the *Express*; we showing him those we had borrowed. With the exception of one signature, which he thought doubtful, he seemed inclined to think the MSS. authentic. We were not so complimentary to those he showed us. Taking his statements as to the cabinet with the secret spring, and his denial or modification on the occasion of our second visit of the statements he made on our first, we were no wiser as to how he came by his boasted MSS. than if we had not conversed with him on the subject. His ideas seemed to fit like the objects in a kaleidoscope. If asked as to Mr Mackenzie's *bona fides*, I would be puzzled to answer, beyond saying that if he be the dupe of the forger, like a partridge or a lapwing dreading danger to its nest, he has the "talent of his weakness;" and if he be the accomplice of the forger, he is at least gifted with the "talent of his sin." Putting all the circumstances together, I doubt if Mr Mackenzie has in his possession a genuine MS. by Burns. I am willing to believe that if he possessed such—and were it "free" or fair—that in posing as a philanthropist and virtually making his peace with the *Cummock Express*, he would have presented it to the Carnegie Library, and not have dragged the "Auld Toon" of Ayr—the home of Honest men and bonnie lassies—through the mud.

All honour to the men of Ayr for their courage in verifying the MS. of the "Bonny Banks of Ayr" before placing it among their treasures. Ex-Provost Goudie could not have refused it, whatever he may have thought about it; and the committee, when it was challenged, as it was by Mr M'Naught, the new editor of the Burns Chronicle, Treasurer Mackay, of Kilmarnock, and myself could not have accepted it without, in the first instance, putting it to a reasonable test. The MS. has been weighed in the balance and found wanting; and what, I ask, is he to give to Ayr by way of compensation?

I give him another challenge. It is this. If his unique copy of "Scots Wha Hae," which is a MS. of the first importance, and as there are differences of opinion as to the text of the poem—a recent editor having adopted the form given in an early Chap-Book—I offer, if the MS. be genuine—and I am not very particular as to who it may be submitted to—and if he will present it to Ayr Carnegie Library, I undertake to collect from among my friends, and present to Mr Mackenzie, the difference between the value of the condemned MS.—supposing it had been real—and the "Scots Wha Hae," leaving to Mr Dowell and Mr Chapman to fix the values; and I am willing, too, to leave to their judgment the genuineness or otherwise of the "Scots Wha Hae."—I am, &c.

W. C. ANGUS.







P.S.—That Mr James Mackenzie, F.S.A., is an adroit vendor of MSS. is confirmed by the following letter, which he sent in reply to a gentleman who wished to purchase the John Hill letter. As it helps to reveal the extent of his possessions, we give him the benefit of our advertisement:—

(Copy.)

Edinburgh, 45 Forrest Road, 16th August 1892.

DEAR SIR,—I am favoured with your letter of yesterday's date regarding the letter of Robert Burns, the notice of which appeared in the *Cummock Express*. This letter was not for sale, but relating to an event which may have happened there, and addressed to one residing there. I was interested in it as it refers to Mr Nicol, and intended it to go with a volume of poems by Professor Wilkie of St Andrews, which formed part of Burns' library, and has written on it by the poet, "Presented to me by Mr Nicol," and his own name on it two places. I might sell the two together if I got a fair offer for them.

In any case, I shall be delighted to show these here at any time, or indeed any other of my MSS. that may interest you. I have also a number of Burns' best MSS., including the copy of the first *Scots Wha ha*, as sent to Thomson and afterwards destroyed and changed in copy.—I remain, yours truly,

(Signed) JAMES MACKENZIE.

National Liberal Club, London, S.W.

SIR,—Quite a flutter has been created here by the spirited and well-informed exposure of the MSS. forgeries in the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*. I subjoin printed list, which at the moment cannot but be interesting to your readers of "Burns' manuscripts" which was sent to a friend here the other day. The list is without the usual imprint, but the bookseller from whom it was received will no doubt, by placing the MSS. themselves at your disposal, which, doubtless, he will be glad to do, would give you an opportunity of reproducing one or two *bona-fide* examples of the caligraphy of the poet; and hardly less interesting would be the autographs on the docquets.

Several of the booksellers are of opinion that the *Dispatch* articles, to answer their purpose, should be reproduced in pamphlet form. They say that the articles in hand form would sell not only at the shrines of the poet, but in all the towns where the works of Burns are in demand. Like other forgeries of the kind, these MSS.

Will have their day and cease to be.

But, for a long time to come, they will appear on occasion; and so the articles, which are interesting in themselves, cannot be too widely circulated.—I am, &c.

VERATIS.

[Space does not permit of our printing the list which we recognise as coming from George Street. Whether the specimens are genuine or not, of course, we cannot say.]

#### "THE PAWNBROKER SPEAKETH."

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH,"]

Edinburgh, November 26, 1892.

SIR,—When your reporter called on me on Friday asking for information regarding the alleged great forgeries, he showed me two MSS. and told me they had been sold at one of our Company's auction sales, and asked me when the sale took place. This I could not tell him, as we sell thousands of different articles, including MSS. by auction every year, and as he did not, or would not, give me the name of the purchaser, I was left like the individual looking for the proverbial needle in the haystack. In fact, it was quite impossible for me to state definitely whether the documents he showed me had been sold at one of our auction sales or not.

If information should be required in connection with the matter, if I can give it, it will be given to the proper people in the proper place and at the proper time. I observe from your issue of this date that your correspondent signing himself "J. L.," and who heads his letter "Another Victim," states that he purchased an album containing numerous autographs, &c., at one of our sales two years ago, and for which he paid a fairly large sum of money. If he thinks he paid too high a price for it, it is distinctly his own fault, as I always give our auctioneer instructions when selling MSS. not to guarantee them, and in this case as in others, my instructions were carried out to the letter. It is, therefore, scarcely right in the circumstances for people to rush into print with their bad bargains.—I am, &c.

GEORGE TAIT.

[Mr Tait has evidently forgotten the particulars of the interview already. He was informed of the name of the purchaser of the MSS., and our reporter asked him to turn up this gentleman's account to get the date. He left the room to do so, and returned in a few minutes after to say that he really could not give any information. Evidently Mr Tait is of opinion that it is no part of his duty to assist persons who are doing their best to track down a notorious forger.]

"SCOTS WHA HAE."

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH,"]

Edinburgh, November 28, 1892.

SIR,—Allow me to say that the MS. copy of Burns' "Scots Wha Hae" which Mr John S. Kennedy, of New York, presented to the Town Council here was bought by him from Mr Quarritch, of London, for £70, and that the copy of it which he bought from Mr Stillie, of George Street, for £50 was sent to the Lennox Library in New York.—I am, &c.

ONE WHO KNOWS.

#### A BOOKSELLER'S STORY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH,"]

Edinburgh, November 25, 1892.

SIR,—A few years ago a young man named Smith, at one time a solicitor's clerk, offered to me at my shop a short letter said to be by Burns, and in his handwriting, as far as I could judge. I gave him £1 for it, and a few days later he sold the two letters by Scott and a Queen Anne's signature; after that I refused to buy from him. I have one of the Scott letters yet, and if it will be of any use in bringing the forger to justice I shall be glad to submit it to you; the Burns letter I tried to sell at a profit, but its not having a history, customers were afraid to risk. I eventually sold it for 15s., stating to the purchaser how I got it.

A fellow bookseller, whose shop is in Bristo Place, told me at the time that he had a number of similar MSS., purchased evidently from the same mysterious "Smith." It is also a fact that Mr Mackenzie, the chemist, has been a very frequent visitor at the Bristo Place shop. Why does not this bookseller state what he knows about this matter? From what source did he procure the very extensive collection of MSS.—Burns, Jacobite, &c.—which he has shown to his customers, and for some of which he obtained good prices?

It is well known in the trade that these MSS. have passed from shop to shop, and it may be quite possible that certain booksellers have paid high prices for forgeries, and do not like to admit that they have been taken in.

I would like to ask Mr Stillie the question direct—"Are you quite satisfied that none of those forged MSS. have found their way into your shop?"

I enclose my name and address, and sign myself

AN EDINBURGH BOOKSELLER.

#### A WISE JUDGE OF MSS.

Edinburgh, November 25, 1892.

SIR,—It would be well if some of our citizens had been gifted with the wisdom and knowledge of Mr H. O. Coxe.

When the notorious Simonides had deceived Professor Lepsius, of Berlin, and Sir Frederick Madden, of the British Museum, and his transactions with them had been successful, the cunning Greek presented himself one day at the Bodleian Library and introduced himself to Mr Coxe with a bundle of precious MSS. Simonides first unrolled some *genuine* MSS., which Mr Coxe pronounced to be as old as the 12th and 13th centuries. So far good. Another MSS., which smelt of hoar antiquity, the leaves of vellum crumbling with very age, the oute librarian scanned and even smelt the ancient document. The forger expected that his victim would pronounce the MS. as old as our most ancient New Testament MSS., A and B.

"How old may that be?" asked the Greek.

"About the middle of the nineteenth century," was the dry and crushing reply.

Simonides packed up his MSS. with a crestfallen look and departed, no business being done. Mr Coxe was not caught with chaff.

Simonides heard of a certain nobleman who was fond of Biblical MSS., and paid good prices for them. He found his Lordship more easily gulled than Mr Coxe, but what was paid the amiable nobleman would not disclose to the late Dr Scrivener, who inspected them shortly after and pronounced the whole a huge fraud. Had our Scotch collectors and noblemen shown the same discretion and knowledge as Dr Scrivener and Mr Coxe possessed the lucrative business and







occupation of certain gentlemen would have ended years ago, and some money would have been saved if current reports are correct.

A little knowledge of the first principles of criticism would have saved them cash and literary credit.—I am, &c. Mac.

[The interview above narrated had its counterpart in Edinburgh in connection with the "Solemn League and Covenant." But this story will keep.]

#### THE METHODS OF THE MYSTERIOUS SMITH.

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT WHOM WE KNOW.]

During the course of your present investigation, mention has more than once been made of the difficulties in the way of obtaining suitable paper for his purpose which beset the MSS. forger; and, among the various shifts to which he is thereby forced to resort, the utilisation of the fly-leaves of old folios has been indicated as one much in favour. Certain circumstances which took place a few years since are thereby recalled to mind.

In the year 1888, a certain well-known repository of second-hand books in George IV. Bridge became the happy hunting ground of a specialist of some note. He was a gentleman brisk in movement, and in manner affable. His particular hobby consisted in a love for the acquisition of English-printed folios, and works bound in vellum. An inordinate desire for that class of literary ware characterised the new customer. From time to time he made various calls, and seldom departed without purchasing half a dozen or more weighty tomes.

Despite the nature of his quest, he was neither antiquary nor bookworm. Though a trifle shy at first, the gentleman ere long thawed sufficiently to volunteer the information that he held an appointment as designer of devices on book covers in a famous publishing house. But he did not stop at a tale of unvarying monotony; for, while at one time his employers would be a South Side firm, the next they might be quite another, and located in the northern part of the city. Still further, on other occasions he would speak of no firm at all, but would be simply an artist, with a *penchant* for painting books in picturesque groups. All such details, revealing an absent-minded frankness of disposition rather than a prudent retentiveness of memory, fell from him in fragmentary portions while bustling about and diving hither and thither in search of the precious volumes. But, whether he called in the role of designer or of artist, the demand for the folios and vellum bindings never failed.

Our folio-loving friend exhibited, in the course of his dealings at the book shop, an amiable peculiarity or two which might be worth recording. For one thing, unlike many respected book-hunting customers, he studiously refrained from unduly pressing for an abatement from the very modest prices so plainly marked on the goods. Again, his desire to save trouble was remarkable. His purchases, when packed, formed, as will be readily understood, parcels both heavy and large. These he would invariably carry off himself, utterly refusing repeated offers to forward them to his address. Such an instance of consideration for others, coupled with an entire absence of false pride, is seldom met with, and therefore all the more pleasing to chronicle.

The candour displayed in the matter of his varied avocations, the gentleman did not see fit to extend to the subject of his name; but, of course, under the circumstances, there was nothing in that. It came out, however, in a somewhat curious manner.

Among the books bought by this customer was an old folio, partially printed in black letter, but in a rather bad state of preservation. It had lain for long on one of the shelves. Though cheap at the few shillings at which it was priced, none of the literary *cognoscenti* by whom it had been seen had cared to become its possessor. Mr — was one of those who had thus rejected the ancient folio. At length there came along a good Samaritan, and the literary waif quitted the sombre shades of the second-hand book shop, to be carried thence, perchance, to the more æsthetic surroundings of the "painter's studio," and there be glorified in the service of Art.

Those in charge of the book shop, amidst the multifarious transactions incident to the place, might have forgotten all about this particular book, which had gone the way of many others, probably never more to be heard of. But such was not to be; for, shortly after the sale in question, a trustworthy communication reached them which created a renewal of interest in both book and customer. That gentleman,

whose name turned out to be Smith, had been too modest when speaking of himself. He had omitted to mention that, over and above the Art business, he from time to time sought a little relaxation in the more commonplace but quite as lucrative capacity of dealer in old books.

The nature of the communication which had shown the versatility of Mr Smith was to the effect that the folio bought in George IV. Bridge had been sold by him at a most remunerative profit to Mr Brown of Bristol Place; further, that Mr Brown had shown the same to the gentleman referred to, who, although recognising the book as one which he had formerly passed over, was believed to have become its ultimate purchaser at a sum which meant several thousand per cent. increase on the original price.

The Mr Smith therein spoken of is identical with him referred to in Saturday's *Dispatch*. That he was a frequent purchaser of folios and vellum-bound books at a shop in George IV. Bridge is a simple, easily-ascertained fact. That he sold the book, as described, to Mr Brown is certain; as also that Mr Brown offered the same to Mr — at a greatly enhanced price. That Mr — bought the book he had formerly rejected, on these terms, was a matter of common talk at the time, and no doubt the transaction was perfectly *bona fide*.

The book, of course, might really have been one of those lucky finds now, alas! so infrequent. Such, though within the bounds of possibility, is scarcely probable in view of the number of knowing ones through whose hands it had passed before the advent of Mr Smith. Or, again, while not especially valuable in itself, it might have been infinitely enriched by a genuine touch of some illustrious "vanished hand" long since changed to dust? This, of course, is only a surmise. But this much is certain—that Smith carried on a big business in "enhancing the value" of old books by some strokes of his pen.

#### A HINT.

21 Dalmeny Street, Leith, November 26, 1892.

SIR,—I have read with interest your exposures of the forged MSS. Any one who is the least observant cannot fail to notice the similarity of the different specimens published by you. One thing I notice myself is that great pains has been taken in "executing" the signature, which gives it the appearance of the letter itself being done by one person and the signature by another. This is more marked in the receipt signed "Robert Burns" than the rest. When one looks at the writing on the dockets in which the MSS. were pawned, it strikes one that the forger must have written a good number of these forged documents, as his hand seems to have forgotten how to write in its own way, but writes in a style not unlike some of our authors and poets.

I beg to draw your attention to a method which has been used with great success in detecting forged handwriting—viz., that of making an enlarged photograph of the handwriting. It is found, on enlarging the handwriting, if it is the work of a forger, the enlarged specimen will show all the lines disconnected in this fashion: — — — because they have been what is technically called "painted in" with the pen. If the writing is original and the work of the author by whom it is signed, it will show a continuous line, thus: — — —.

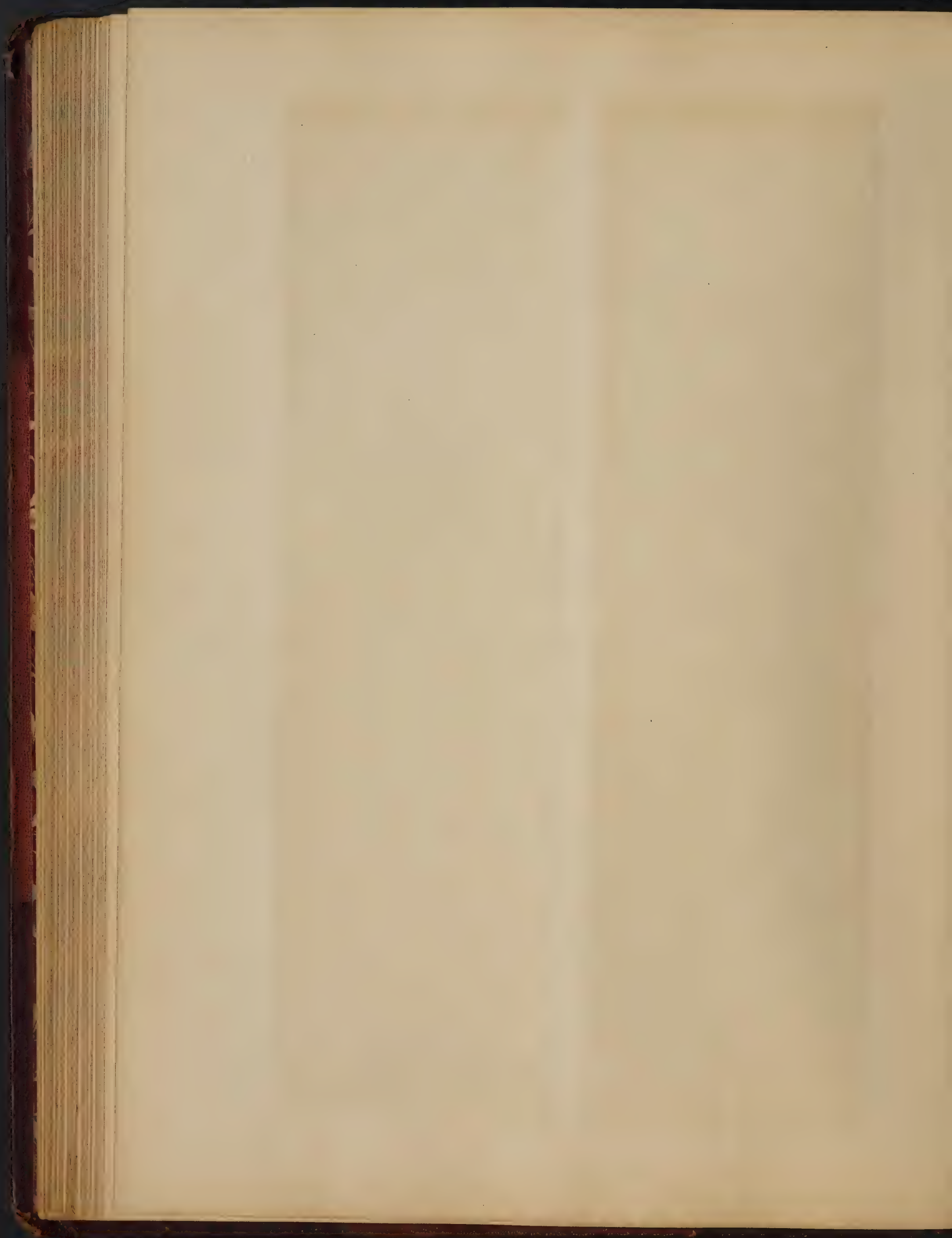
I trust this hint will be of some use to you in exposing these impudent frauds.—Yours &c.,

J. O. YOUNG.

#### "MR JOHN HILL, WEAVER, CUMNOCK."

All attempts to trace the "Mr John Hill, weaver, Cumnock," to whom Mr Mackenzie's "Burns" letter was addressed, have failed. Tradition is silent regarding him, and one gentleman, a native of Cumnock, whose father and grandfather (both old men) resided there, and who was in the habit of hearing stories of all the old worthies, never heard his name mentioned. This is all the more curious, since he is represented as a friend and apparently a crony of Burns. Referring to this matter the *Cumnock News* says:—"When we read this letter for the first time, we did not for a moment doubt its authenticity, and, for our own satisfaction, endeavoured to find, if possible, some of the descendants of the bard's correspondent. In this, however, we were utterly unsuccessful." The same paper explains Mr Mackenzie's connection with Cumnock by stating that he had something to do with the Feden memorial, with which the editor of the *Cumnock Express* was also associated. After referring to our opening article on the Forgeries the *Cumnock News* says:—







"This is what one might call plain speaking with a vengeance, in other words, we must believe that 'the letter' is a spurious one until Mr Mackenzie takes such steps as leave no doubts in the minds of the community that his judgment is correct. As a matter of fact, the question is one which cannot be confined to a small area—it is of national importance. Either Mr Mackenzie is right or he is wrong, and upon him lies the onus of proving his 'letter' to be genuine. In our opinion, the most satisfactory course to pursue would be to submit it, as suggested, to the authorities of the British Museum, for whose decision everybody must have respect. If they give it the hall mark of genuineness, its value will be enhanced; if they say it is spurious, then it is worthless to anybody, except in so far as it might be kept and shown as a clever forgery. In any case the matter has received a publicity and an attention which renders it necessary that Mr Mackenzie should come forward with such proofs as to its genuineness as will satisfy the reasonable doubts of all who have read the correspondence."

#### THE INCREDULOUS MR STILLIE.

A correspondent sends to us a copy of the following letter which appeared in the *Kilmarnock Herald* on Friday:—

##### "BURNS MANUSCRIPTS."

"SIR,—In consequence of a statement in the *Cummock Express* that great Forgeries (?) of Burns manuscripts are in circulation, for which assertion there is not one word of truth, and as I am the largest dealer and the largest holder of Burns manuscripts in Scotland, I have considered it necessary to place the *Cummock Express* publisher in the hands of my law agent.—Yours truly,

(Signed)

"JAMES STILLIE."

[Why on earth Mr Stillie should threaten the *Cummock Express* we fail to understand. It spoke of him as a distinguished authority, and rather tried to justify him than otherwise. But, of course, we do not question Mr Stillie's right to take any action he pleases.]

#### SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."] Edinburgh, November 26, 1892.

SIR,—The fierce light thrown upon the proceedings of the MSS. manufacturers by your thorough investigation is hailed with joy by all who revere the immortal memory of Burns, of Scott, and of other worthies of our country. The following suggestions may be worthy of consideration:—

(1) The list so obligingly furnished by Mr Maloney ought to be supplemented by all who are in possession of spurious or doubtful MSS. The difficulty is to get parties to confess that they have been victimised. All honour to those who have the moral courage to do so!

(2) The prices paid, the names of the vendors, the date of the purchase, and copies of the receipted accounts should be forwarded to you for publication. What a curious list this would make! It is clear that any money paid for documents ascertained to be false should be refunded without delay. Let the vendors take the necessary steps to recover the amounts repaid from the parties who furnished such a variety of subjects, but obviously forgot that detection would follow, sooner or later. If they cannot be found, then the vendors must bear the loss, and few will be found to sympathise with them, unless they promptly come forward to tell frankly all they know regarding the sources from which the MSS. were obtained. It is certainly their duty to do this.

(3) A loan exhibition might be opened in some central position, where the public could acquire a knowledge of the *modus operandi* of the forgers with specimens of their fabrications. This would materially aid in stopping the nefarious traffic, which has been allowed to continue much too long. The opportunity might also be taken to exhibit a collection of genuine MSS., and books with autographs of eminent Scotsmen, of course under the care of trustworthy individuals. Their genuineness would be undoubted if contributed from the public archives and private collections throughout Scotland. If Lord Dalhousie could be induced to lend from Brechin Castle the folio volume of Burns' letters to George Thomson (which was sold in Edinburgh in 1852), a boon of no ordinary kind would be conferred on all to whom the writings of our National Bard are dear. Many of his finest poems, it is well known, were written for Thomson's Collection of Scots songs.

I trust this hint may be taken, and that the success of the recent Heraldic Exhibition will encourage some antiquarian experts to give the project consideration

at least. The public would, I feel convinced, be delighted to see some of the genuine manuscript treasures which abound in "Puir auld Scotland."—I am, &c. VIATOR.

[These suggestions may be worthy the consideration of the Burns Exhibition Committee in Glasgow. An exhibition of forged documents would certainly be of interest.]

#### MISCELLANEOUS MSS.

We conclude the commentaries on the miscellaneous collection of MSS. bought by Mr Kennedy, of New York, the first part of which on the Burns MSS., by a well-known citizen of Edinburgh, we gave on Saturday:—

The following have become the property of Mr Kennedy, and will in all probability be presented to the Lennox Library, New York:—

I. Letter signed "Marie R." It is one expressing gratitude to some nobleman, and dated "At Edinburgh, the 12th Dec. 1561."

Lord Hailes had the letter in his possession, who parted with it to Mr Thomas Scott, Glasgow, for £ (not entd.)

II. To the "Lordis of our Session," anent the trial of the Queen's servant, James Meldrum, dated 1 Jan'y, 1568. Signed, Marie R. On small quarto; bears the mark of Her Majesty's seal.

III. Letter written by "Lindsay of Byres," "fræ Edzel, 14th August 1564," to Lord Forbes, asking him to send to James Forbes and see what stuff his men are made off, and warning him that the Privy Council is for Her Majesty and against him (Jas.)

IV. Letter from James VI. "fræ our Palace at Falkland, the 16 August 1581," to Lord Lindsay. This letter is printed. Where?

V. Charles R. Commission to James Armstrong, 16th June 1632, to serve in Lord Kilnairs' Regiment of Horse. J. A. was a "gentilman residing in Dumbartoun." Seal gone.

VI. Charles R. Commission to James M'Arthur, dated "At Newcastle, 18th May 1646. Seal gone.

VII. Passport from "Charles, Prince of Wales, &c., Regent of Scotland, England, France, and Ireland, and the dominions, &c.," to James Wightman, of Perth, and his two servants to pass to Glasgow, and thence to Dumfries upon their lawful business.

Given at the Camp at Perth, this 7th Sep. 1745. Charles, P.R.

VIII. Letter to Lord Cromartie. From J. Murray, secretary to Prince Charles, dated "From Holyrude House, 15th October 1745, informing his Lordship of the arrival at Montros, and sending him the papers received that he may present them to His Royal Highness." He also sends monies, and advises a guard so that the money and stands of arms brought may not be lost. He notes that the Marquis d'Equilles is with the party, whose appearance at this time is most opportune. He adds, "you may trust the bearer hereof as myself, and send him to return by Kingorne, as there is some talk of a body of ships being ready to intercept all News, as hath already been done."

Addressed To my Lord Cromartie or his steward These with all spied. J. Murray. [By Donald Grahame.]

IX. Proclamation ordering the Lieges to assemble at Perth for the cause of King James VIII. In name of Prince Charles. Signed by J. Murray and J. Drummond. Camp at Perth, 11th Sep. 1745.

X. To John Campbell, at Glenmore in Argyll, Nov. 29th 1745, signed "Charles, P.R.," vowing to do good to John, and praying for "law and order" in this our kingdom.

XI. Blank Commission signed Charles, P.R., dated 10 Sep. 1745. Given at Perth.

XII. Warrant signed Charles, P.R., at Perth, in favour of John Hume, rescenter, for stores supplied to the troops. J. Murray adds a note as to John's failure to implement his part of the agreement.

John Dickie got this from Mrs Alexander Hume, 18th Dec. 1803.





XIII.  
Commission signed "Charles P.R." at Glenfinen, 20th Aug. 1745, to Capt. Kenneth M'Pherson, now residing at Perth. J. D. L. had this from Macpherson's son, who denies in 1803 that his father served as above.

XIV.  
Signed by Charles, P.R., to Campbell of Shawfield to intimate that the cess of Glasgow must be paid or it would be put under military law.

This letter was in August 1763 given by R. Campbell to R. Haliburton. It afterwards was the property of the Hon. Henry Brougham, who gave it in payment of an account on 12th July 1829.

XV.  
James R., November 1714. Bill for £200 stg. to James Stuart, of Dundee, in the county of Mearns.

XVI.  
Commission signed "Dundie," "16th Dec. 1688, at Dudhope (?), appointing Capt. Geo. Drummond major in Ewan M'Pherson's Regiment."

XVII.  
"Dundie" to Lord Callander anent conduct of Argyll, 5th July 1569.

XVIII.  
Perth, 13th Jany. 1729. Receipt signed "Ro: Campbell." £40 received from "Jas. Anderson, writer," payable in beeves. Rob Roy was a good writer, and his signature is that of a gentleman of culture.

XIX.  
Same as above to James Wilson, Peebles. Rob's hand is shaky, but the signature is good.

XX.  
Dispatch signed "O. Cromwell," at Linlithgow, 11th Oct. 1650.

XXI.  
Letter signed "O. Cromwell" to one of the generals, beginning "Friend."

XXII.  
Signed "George Monck" to George Paterson, Blackness Castle, Linlithgow, dated 17th Februar\* 1659.

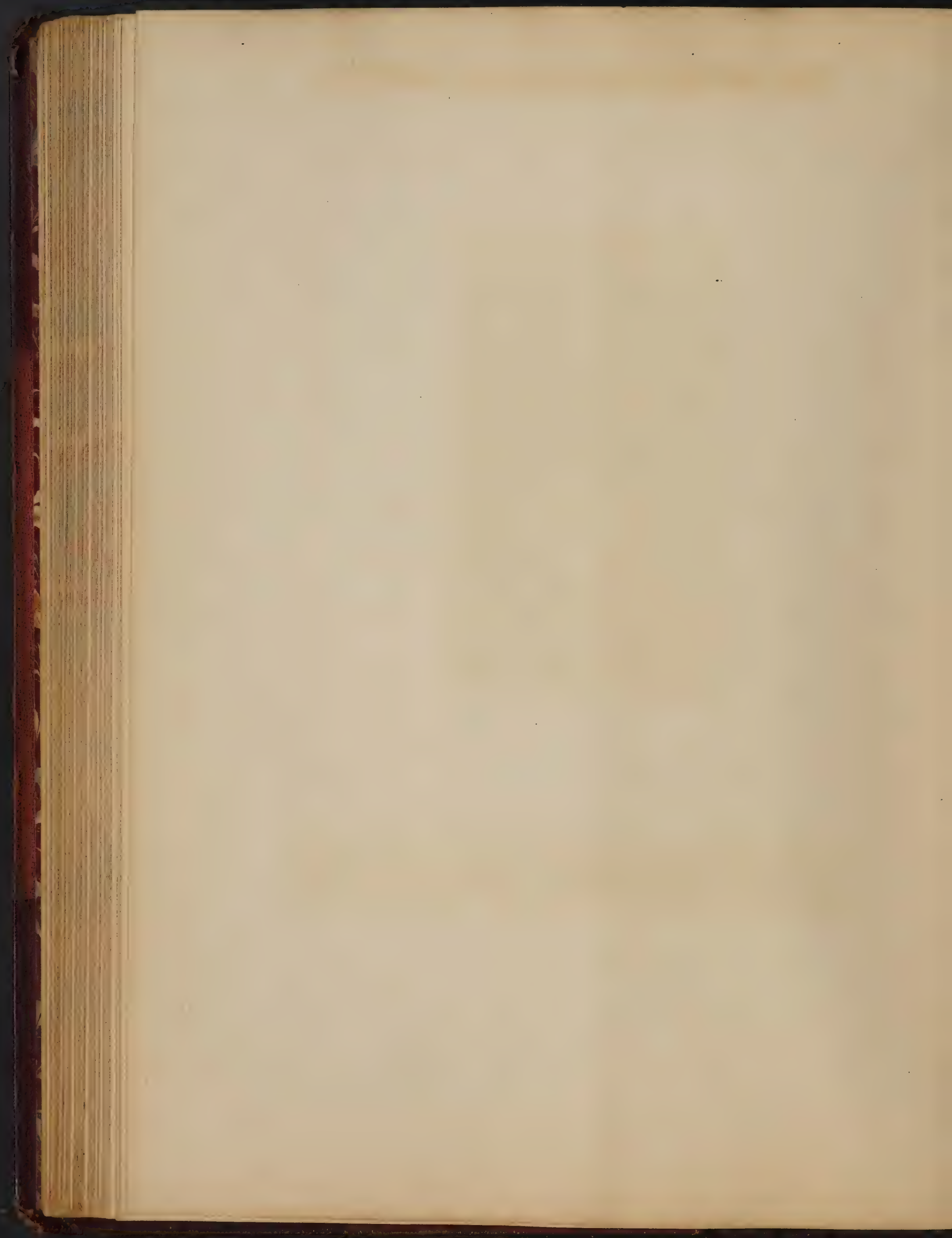
XXIII.  
The same to Captain Jas. Atkinson.

XXIV.  
Letter from Burns to Miss Kennedy, dated Mauchline, Mar. 1788.

XXV.  
Order signed "Ro: Campbell," Cabroch, 3d Sep. 1732. Good hand of Rob Roy.

XXVI.  
John Knox, frae my house in Edinburgh, 16 Januarie 1563.

XXVII.  
Marie R.  
Bot from Bailie Brown, Edin., 1696 for 10 lb. Scots.





## THE MSS. FRAUDS.

### STORY AND CONFESSION OF THE FORGER.

#### SINGULAR CONFIRMATION OF THE FORGERIES.

In support of the truth of the allegation that the young man Smith is familiar with the history of many of the documents now acknowledged to be spurious, we present to-day a singularly convincing piece of evidence apart from the virtual confession which we refer to below. It has been observed that many of the forged documents present *prima facie* a curious family likeness, and closer examination of the caligraphy confirms the view that they are all the work of one hand. The publication of the *fac-similes* of some of the forged papers has created such widespread interest, not to say indignation, that numerous gentlemen have come forward with offers of help in the task of unearthing the forger. One of these, when on Friday he saw the *fac-simile*, particularly, of the alleged Burns receipt and the docket in which it had been enclosed, although he had never heard Smith's name mentioned in connection with the matter, at once recognised the handwriting as bearing a striking resemblance to the caligraphy of a clerk, named Smith, whom he casually employed.

By the public-spirited conduct of this gentleman we have been furnished with the means of enabling our readers to compare specimens of Smith's acknowledged handwriting with the penmanship in the two documents mentioned. The following is a specimen of Smith's handwriting executed within the last month:—

*Preparing for discussion in Sumner Roll*





Appended are specimens of Smith's handwriting placed alongside of similar words taken from the docket and Burns receipt already referred to.

THE BURNS LETTER DOCKET. SMITH'S ACKNOWLEDGED HANDWRITING.

*Autograph under*

*dated*      *date*

*for*      *for*

*to*      *to*

*Tavern*      *Ta*

*Mackenzie Mac*

*4937649376*

FROM THE FORGED BURNS RECEIPT. SMITH'S HANDWRITING.

*sum*      *sum*  
*at*      *at*

Let our readers compare these two sets of words together. Such a comparison makes the conclusion that they have been written by one and the same hand inevitable. The "Au" of "Autograph" in the docket and the "Au" of "Audit" in Smith's acknowledged handwriting seem identical, and the same remark applies to the other words or letters set in comparison.

The person of whose caligraphy we have given specimens is A. H. Smith, who occupies lodgings in Brunswick Street. He is one of the army of casual workers who pick up a job here and there as copying clerks. He appears to be a little over thirty years of age, of sallow com-

plexion, with dark moustache and slight side whiskers. The expression of his countenance is unanimated; rather he looks dull, and appears mildly-mannered. He has a plausible, insinuating way with him, although he would be the last person whose appearance would lead one to suspect him guilty of the authorship of such a mass of manuscripts, which have puzzled or deceived thousands of people. But he is not so dull as he looks. He is said to be well educated, and one of his acquirements is currently reported to be an intimate knowledge of the lives and works of Burns, Scott, and Thackeray. Among his friends he is known as "Antique" Smith, from frequently having with him old documents or curiosities of various kinds for sale. Among them also he is recognised as an authority on literary matters, and his testimony is in the habit of being accepted as final in a dispute. If he is responsible for spurious manuscripts relating to these authors, his literary equipment must have lent him powerful aid in compiling and preparing them for the market.

He seems to have been bred to the law, though since he left the service of the late Mr Ferrier, W.S.—which departure was of a summary kind, for he was tried on a serious charge, though acquitted—his means of living have been, it is said, pretty much dependent upon copying work and other of the lower or elementary accessories to the machinery of the law.

His version of how he got possession of historical and literary manuscripts of antiquarian interest tallies with the one already narrated. Mr Ferrier's father was agent for several well-known families. Smith was Ferrier's junior clerk. The agency had been removed to more capable hands apparently, for the business had been dwindling; but Ferrier's office still contained bundles of old documents connected with several estates. Smith repeats that Mr Ferrier told him to clear them out and destroy them. Instead, Smith took them home, found among them many papers of value, and tried to turn them into hard cash. His story is that he went to Brown in Bristo Place with some of these manuscripts. Brown doubted his story. Smith referred him to Ferrier. Ferrier, it is said, confirmed the truth of the statement that he had given permission to Smith to destroy the old papers. That seemed to satisfy Brown. He traded with Smith in manuscripts. Smith now says he was content to take small sums ranging from 1s. to 15s. on the spot for "documents of value," rather than wait for larger returns until the documents were bought by collectors. Smith found the trade to pay, and from trafficking in the genuine article it was an easy step to enter upon the manufacture of the counterfeit. He was willing and ready, and apparently able, to supply any kind of ancient manuscript on given notice. He says the demand was constant, and he furnished the supply. This is the way Smith in conversation talks. His allusions are general; he never condescends to talk of particular documents. He is said to dread prosecution for his part in the traffic; though he doubts if positive proof that he manufactured MSS. can be adduced. He refuses, however, to make a clean breast of the matter in the meantime. He has, however, said sufficient to acknowledge that he was primarily concerned in the business.

We purpose to-morrow publishing more about the Forger's career and habits.





## "THE SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT."

"AN OLD LADY IN FIFE."

We have at length got an explanation of the history of the "Solemn League and Covenant"—at least of one of them—so far as Mr Mackenzie has given it, though still further information is desirable. An Edinburgh gentleman who had bought one of Mr Mackenzie's documents at second hand for upwards of £20 found on sending it to London that it was spurious. He returned it, and subsequently Mr Mackenzie submitted more documents, and the gentleman saying he was prepared to purchase a good specimen, if really genuine, offered to take a batch to London and have them examined. After some demur Mr Mackenzie agreed; they were, to the number of eight or nine, submitted to the British Museum, and pronounced spurious every one. This probably accounts for Mr Mackenzie's feelings towards the British Museum. In the course of conversation Mr Mackenzie stated that he had in his possession a "Solemn League and Covenant" which he had got "from an old lady in Fife." The question now arises, Who is the old lady?

Regarding the interview which Mr Mackenzie had with Dr Joseph Anderson, secretary to the Society of Antiquaries, in reference to the two copies of "The Solemn League and Covenant," it may be stated that the last-named gentleman assumed that the matter had been put before him by Mr Mackenzie for advice, with the view of the documents being brought under the notice of the Society. Dr Anderson examined the

manuscript, remarked to Mr Mackenzie that "it was written yesterday," and "advised him to have nothing to do with it."

### OUR FORMER INQUIRIES.

On turning up some of the notes kept of our inquiries a little more than two years ago we find some statements which are worthy of being recalled. First we take

Mr William Brown, bookseller, Princes Street, and of this gentleman, who was visited by a gentleman deputed to make inquiries on our behalf, it is only but right that public acknowledgment should be made of the frankness with which he stated his views and his desire that the forgeries should be unearthed. The following is in the notes:—  
Q.—Are there any forged documents being sold? A.—Shoals of them. I had a parcel of MSS. sent to me some four or five months ago, which I returned. All were forged except one. The firm from which they came acknowledged afterwards I was right.  
Q.—How do you know a forged MS.? A.—Very easily. I have had too long practice not to know a forgery.  
Q.—I suppose the difficulty will be in getting the paper? A.—Well I detected a forgery by its paper lately—a document bearing to be written by Sir W. Scott in large folio paper. The edges were much frayed and crumpled, and it had been folded up and kept in the pocket till the folds were well worn, but I found at one side the marks of stitching, showing that it had been torn for the purpose from a book. Had probably been the fly-leaf of the book.  
Q.—Is the large number of such documents thus thrown on the market not apt to lower the value of genuine ones? A.—Oh, yes; it is apt to make people indifferent as to buying. I have a large stock of genuine MSS.

These are the notes under Mr Stillie's name. We give them as they stand:—Stillie says his MSS. are all genuine. He knows Scott and Burns' signatures thoroughly. The London experts say they are not. He rather deprecates the London experts. His brother was amanuensis to Sir W., and he the message boy. Often at Abbotsford, and always welcome, as he carried the money to Sir W. Produced a number of Burns MSS. T. H. Ferrier had several large boxes full of old papers belonging to Argyll, Rosebery, and other families. These were bought by Brown, Bristo Street (mistake for Place), as waste paper with recommendation of his clerk. He won't admit forgery, however; says all he has seen are genuine. Duke of A. and Rosebery recovered some of their own papers. [We omit next statement as being grossly unjust.] His (Stillie's) stock acquired during long period, sunk a fortune in rare MSS., &c. He got none at Chapman's sale.

To Mr Thin our obligations are also due for the generous and disinterested way in which he assisted us in our inquiries both then and now. His information has been embodied in our recent explanations, and need not be repeated.

Mr Robert Christie said the fellow who had been forging Sir W. Scott's letters was a lawyer's clerk who had several genuine ones, and finding he had a ready sale, took to copying them.

Mr A. Brown, 15 Bristo Place, was offered a whole lot of them two or three years ago (that is before our interview), but refused them. I, —, Royal Bank, bought a number both of Scott, Hogg, Carlyle, Thackeray, and Fergusson. Smith pawned a large number, which were sold by auction at Chapman's.

Mr Webster, University Librarian, said he had had two batches offered—a miscellaneous lot and a number of Scott MSS. Declined the first, then they appeared at a sale by auction. Second lot offered to him had been purchased from Stillie. Mr Webster pronounced them forgeries, and Stillie came to him wanting him to withdraw, but he adhered to his opinion.

There are some additional notes, but these are the essential points.

Among the notes is a leaflet received from Mr Stillie, in which he inveighs against the London experts, who he declares had about two years before "formed a ring against the sale of some Scottish manuscripts in Edinburgh." "I have suffered," he says, "from these Self-Elected Experts, who join and are joined by other A tograph dealers—Pearson & Co. and others—and I am still suffering by this combination from their sophistry and untrustworthy assertions, and can have no claim for relief. . . . Our Scottish Experts are of a different class—Genealogists and connected with our Government Record and Manuscript Offices, and therefore qualified gentlemen. These Self-Elected Experts' position has not been improved since the Pigott Affair. Their opinions in the case of Scott's manuscripts were purely Deceptive and Scandalous."

It would be interesting to know, who were the "Scottish experts" to whom Stillie refers, for those usually accounted high authorities agree with the London experts.

### A KILMARNOCK "SELL" AND OTHER MATTERS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

SIR,—The nearer the kirk the further from good" has, at least, found two illustrations in *re* the forged MSS. Not very long ago an Ayrshire lady accepted, on behalf of an Ayrshire bazaar, what I have no doubt was presented to her in good faith as a *bona fide* MS. of Burns. I am willing to believe that giver and receiver acted upright and honourable parts. The giver was an Edinburgh bookseller, who, if there be aught of truth in Macaulay's dictum that pastry cooks are not necessarily fond of pies, may, after all, not be an expert in his own wares. Anyhow, so far as I know, there is nothing to show that he acted other than an honourable part. My point lies in the fact that the sham MS.—for such it is, if the power of seeing has not gone out of my eyes—was glassed and framed, and honoured with a conspicuous place in the shop window of the successors of the world famous John Wilson, Kilmarnock, the printer of the famous 1786 edition of the poems. The forged document was disposed of by subscription sale, the said firm selling the tickets; and so far as I am aware this is the first occasion on which it has been publicly challenged.

But "higher yet my bonnet," if the story be true, and I would fain hope it is not. As gossip has it, a Scott MS. had been returned to the said Edinburgh bookseller as being doubtful, if not spurious. Nothing daunted, this never doubting celebrity is said to have boasted of having placed it with the descendants of a great man not a thousand miles from Abbotsford. Neither of the documents would be difficult to verify, if the owners would send them forward, which, in the interests of the public, they are bound to do.

If Mr Mackenzie's unnamed kinsman of the poet, who (*vide* the Cumnock letters) is said to have verified the John Hill epistle be not a myth, he at the worst will have proved himself to be neither better nor worse than others, who, living under the shadow of a great name and believing no evil, have failed to interpret aright the spirit of its reality.—I am, &c.

"A CHIEF'S AMONG YOU TAKIN' NOTES."

### SOME INTERESTING COMPARISONS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

SIR,—In dealing with that part of your exposure of the forged MSS. which relies upon identity of handwriting, you have, I think, hardly done justice to the strength of your case. You might, as it seems to me, have shown so conclusively that the Thackeray letter and its docket were written by the same person that no doubt on the question could remain in anybody's mind.





Thus it is evident that the name "Thackeray" in the docket and in the letter was written by the same hand, from the very peculiar way in which an exactly similar "h" is joined on to the capital "T" in both cases. The "Thackeray" in the docket is a size larger than the "Thackeray" in the letter, but that is about all the difference.

Then when writing the docket the forger clearly thought that there might be some danger in the word "philosophical," and consequently he made both the capital and the small "p" different. He left, however, the intervening "hilos" the same. Nor is that all; for, whereas he wrote in the letter "*Philosophical*," omitting an "i," he actually made the same mistake in the docket, and in doing so hesitated, as his writing shows.

There are other smaller resemblances of lesser note, such as the "Nove" of "Novelist" and "November," but the other two amply suffice to prove the fraud.—I am, &c. J. M. C.

[We had not observed the facts mentioned; they are of much interest.]

#### THE TRADE IN CANADA.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

8 Seton Place, Edinburgh,

November 28, 1892.

SIR,—I follow with much interest the revelations at present appearing in your paper with regard to the above; and, as bearing on the subject, I enclose clipping from Saturday's issue of the *Moray and Nairn Express*. The paragraph is part of a news article, dated 4th instant, written by the Ontario correspondent of the *Express*; and from it you will see that the traffic in ancient MSS. has reached, and apparently flourishes in, Canada. The two letters to which the writer of the article more particularly refers were, it appears, "sent out to Canada, to be sold to the highest bidder, by a Scotch gentleman who has exhausted his fortune in collecting literary curiosities, and who is in straitened circumstances;" and if they are correctly transcribed, they go a long way to show that it was not such a rare thing after all for our national poet to subscribe in full—"Robert Burns." It would be interesting to know who it was that sent these letters to the Canadian market, and whether the rest of his stock-in-trade accompanied them. I am, of course, not able to say whether they are products of the Edinburgh manufactory or not; but some of your readers may possibly be in a position to throw light on the point.

I heartily concur with one of your correspondents to-day who thinks that these "revelations" ought to be preserved in pamphlet form.—I am, &c.

JOHN SHAW.

#### COPY OF PARAGRAPH.

THE IMMORTAL ROBERTS.—President Reid, of the London Ontario St Andrew's Society, is a happy man. He has in his possession two original autograph letters sent by the great national bard of Scotland, Robert Burns, to Dr Blacklock, of Edinburgh, and John Ord, of Lanark, respectively, the former dated October 18, 1785, and the latter August 26, 1787. The letters read as follows:—

Mossiel, October 18th, 1786.

Dr Thos. Blacklock, Edinburgh.

DEAR SIR,—I send you a newspaper herewith, and you will notice marked a humble production by your servant. Would you kindly give me your opinion on its merits or demerits?—I remain, yours sincerely,

ROBERT BURNS.

Stirling, August 26th, 1787.

John Ord, Esq., Lanark.

DEAR SIR,—I am forced to be more laconic in my letter, as I have not had much time on my hands with my present travelling about. I had some intention of sending you the songs from Edinburgh, but could not get a chance. However, you will receive a packet of them with this letter by the hand of the carrier. I have had a favourable settlement.—I am, your obliged friend,

ROBERT BURNS.

The above letters have been sent out to Canada, to be sold to the highest bidder, by a Scotch gentleman who has exhausted his fortune in collecting literary curiosities, and who is in straitened circumstances.

#### THE REAL BROWN.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

26 Princes Street, Edinburgh, Nov. 28, 1892.

SIR,—As I observe that the name of "Mr Brown, bookseller," occurs frequently in your articles on the "MSS. Forgeries," and these articles are likely to be read beyond the circle of Edinburgh antiquarians, may I beg that you will make it clear which Mr Brown you refer to in each case of mentioning the name? This can readily be done, as I believe my namesake distinguishes himself by the adoption of the name "Bristo" before that of Brown.—I am, &c. W. BROWN.

[We are sorry that any doubt should have been created by the similarity of names. Mr William Brown, Princes Street, has acted throughout the business a most worthy part, and the acknowledgment which we make elsewhere of his services was penned yesterday, while we received his letter only this morning.]

#### ANOTHER PROOF.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

7 Seton Place, Edinburgh,

November 28, 1892.

SIR,—In the list of MSS. purchased by Mr Kennedy, New York, there is one purporting to be addressed by Mary Queen of Scots to the "Lordis of our Session," dated 1st January 1568. As the year then began on March 25, this date is really, in modern chronology, 1569. Now, Queen Mary had to resign her crown at Lochleven, as a prisoner, a year and a half before this time, and on the 1st January 1569 she was lying a prisoner in England, without crown, or throne, or official authority of any kind in Scottish affairs. It would be worth while seeing this document addressed from a dethroned and exiled Queen to her "Lordis of our Session."—I am, &c.

J. R.

#### FURTHER TESTIMONY BY THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN.

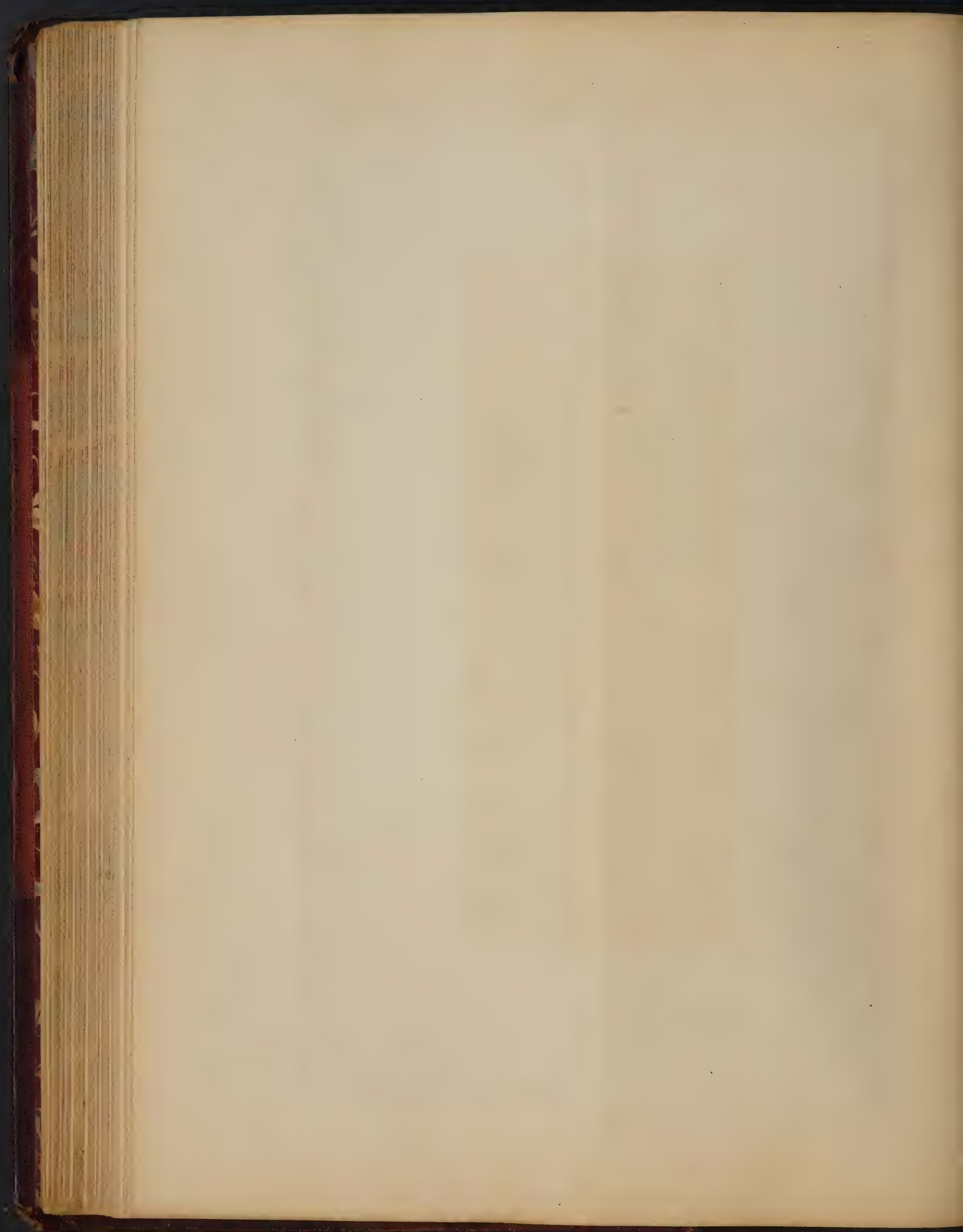
[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

SIR,—Though, as far as I can recollect, it has never hitherto been necessary for me to write a "letter to the editor" on any matter, private or public, I cannot refrain from offering even such small help as I may be able to render you in your noble endeavour to hunt down those miscreants who have been lining their pockets by means of low treachery to the living and of high treason against the dead.

Some years ago I was accosted by one whom I knew to be a happy hunter in the auction-rooms and second-hand booksellers' shops of Edinburgh with the query, whether I was aware of a remarkable collection of historical documents (Jacobite, &c.) about to be dispersed. On my admitting my ignorance, he referred me to Mr Walter Scott, bookseller, Bristo Place, for information, and, he believed, possibly specimens. Mr Scott I already knew as a most obliging, trustworthy, and energetic bookseller. From him I had no difficulty in obtaining a "batch" of "Jacobites, &c.," and it may be confessed that I carried them off in the well-assured hope of adding something of value to the Laing collection of the University of Edinburgh, of which I happened to be custodian. A few days after I handed back the batch to Mr Scott, with the advice that he should have as little to do as possible with articles of such dubious authenticity. While I was not prepared to assert that all were spurious, I found so many that were evidently raw from the forger's hand that I was suspicious of the rest, which, in better company, might have been accepted as genuine. My test had been a careful comparison of the new candidates for authenticity with the authentic corresponding documents in the Laing collection. I was informed by Mr Scott that other gentlemen—Mr Brown, bookseller in Bristo Place, Mr Mackenzie (whose name no longer needs any distinctive designation), and others—had no doubt about the genuineness of the documents, and that he himself was practically booked for the purchase of a certain number.

Further inquiry put me, as I thought, in possession of the name and address of the gentleman who was understood to be responsible for the dispersion of the manuscripts—a kind of shy river-god sitting at the fountain of a copious stream, but hiding himself among the reeds and rushes.

Along with a more experienced friend and colleague (Mr Law, of the Signet Library) I entered into correspondence with the "Great Unknown" "rejoicing in the name of Smith." My letters reached him, and their contents became known without any great delay to one of the booksellers whom you have had occasion to mention more than once. My friend and I endeavoured to obtain a personal interview. But the address (to a house in York Place) which had served for the postman was of no use to us. We met an absolute denial on the part of the inmates of any knowledge, past or present, of any one approximately capable of being identified with the object of our quest. Our quest was ultimately given up, and we contented ourselves with warning our colleagues and friends against too sanguine "acceptance of Jacobites, &c." I may add that Mr Law had the assurance of Mr Chapin that he had sent a batch of the suspected Jacobite documents to the MS. department of the British Museum. It afterwards transpired that the reply was—"Forgeries at a glance."





Some time after this a small packet of "Sir Walter Scott letters" was submitted to me by a friend acting for a gentleman who had purchased them in Edinburgh. A careful comparison of these letters with genuine Sir Walter Scott letters in the Laing collection (of the same period) led me, after consultation with an expert, to reject at least two-thirds of them as either spurious or suspicious. I gave my opinion through my friend, and for some time heard no more of the matter. One day, however, I received a visit from Mr. Stillie, who assured me I had been grievously mistaken, that he (who had been personally acquainted with Sir Walter) had sold the letters as genuine, and that genuine they were. He wished me, consequently, to retract my opinion. This I told him I could not honestly do until I had received some substantial information as to the history of the documents, and Mr. Stillie, I am sorry to say, went away with a very poor opinion of my skill in the authentication of doubtful manuscripts.

Since then more than one "amateur collector" has shown me documents so like "Jacobites, &c.," that in some cases I have felt obliged to run the risk of hurting a good man's feelings by telling him the truth, and in other cases, finding this course too cruel, have smiling put the question by.

The suggestion that the manuscript forgery articles and correspondence should be published separately is, I venture to think, a good one. I most heartily wish you success in your present efforts, and feel sure that every honest Scotsman says "Amen."—I am, &c.

H. A. WEBSTER.

#### THE TRADE IN DUNDEE.

The *Dundee Advertiser* says:—Our readers will have noticed that since the beginning of January last we have repeatedly referred in this column to the shoals of false Burns MSS. which have been lately put in circulation, and have hinted that these could all be traced to Edinburgh. Only last Monday we urged the Edinburgh *literati*, if they had any respect for the national honour, to set on foot inquiries that would put a stop to this nefarious trade. We are glad to notice that our suggestions have at last had effect, and that one of the Edinburgh evening papers has taken up the matter very thoroughly. This is a question of much importance to Dundee, as many of these doubtful documents have been offered to Dundee collectors during the past eighteen months.

#### "THE POOR MAN'S PRAYER."

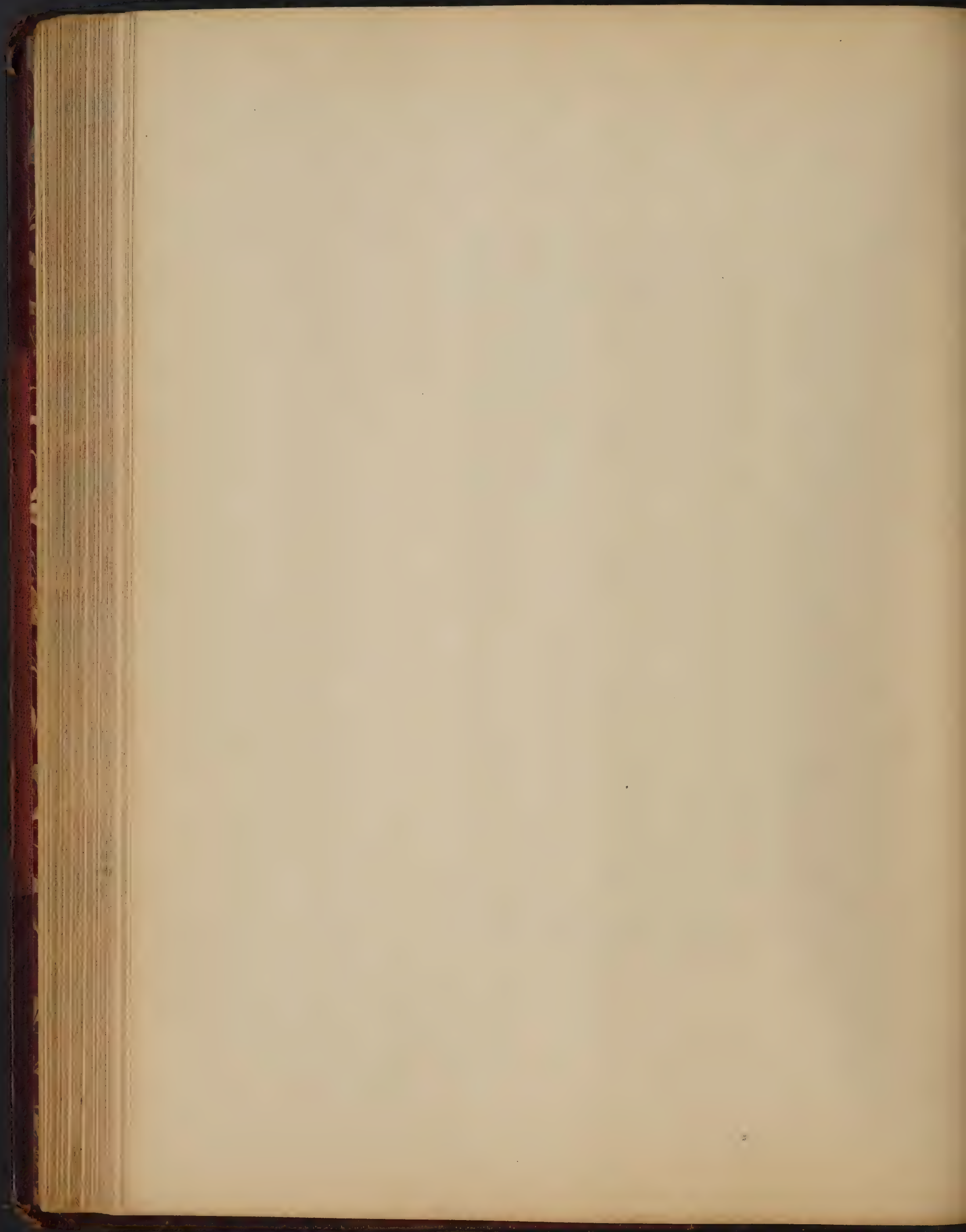
[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

30 Home Street, November 26, 1892.

SIR,—When reading over "The Poor Man's Prayer" in your notice of Burns Forgeries, I found that I was familiar with the poem, and herewith send you an old volume of my father's with the poem in page 191, with the concluding verse, and the other verses missed out in your notice, the author being "Roberts" (presume Dr. Roberts.)—I am, &c.

CHRISTINA GALBRAITH.

[We thank our correspondent. Her copy is contained in a volume of selected pieces (date and title gone), and it includes the final verse added by Smith about "Plenty's horn."]



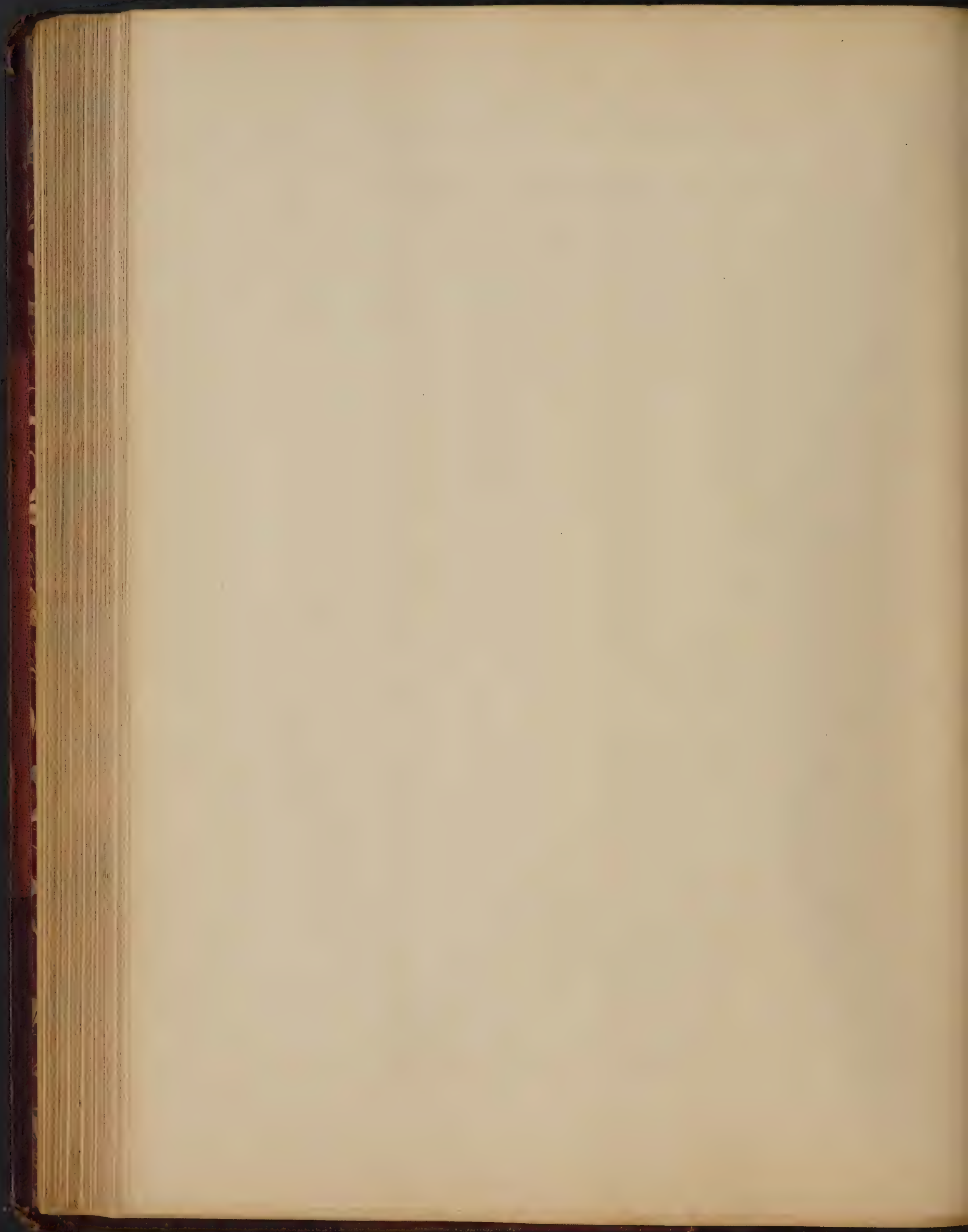


THE most amazing feature of the extraordinary literary frauds, which have long been a disgrace to "The Modern Athens," and which are now being tardily exposed in the columns of the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, is the impunity with which the forger has been allowed, and apparently is still allowed, to carry on his scandalous trade. Several years ago it was well-known to experts that a mass of suspected documents, Jacobite papers, letters of Burns, Scott, &c., were being thrown upon the market by private sale, through pawnbrokers and obscure booksellers, or in the public auction rooms. Quantities went to America and the Colonies; some went to London. Respectable booksellers and private collectors in Edinburgh spent large sums upon them. The flow has continued ever since. The source seems inexhaustible. The marks of spuriousness and fraud, and the identity of the handiwork, were patent on many documents, which were clumsily designed. But long practice and the encouragement received from his patrons have improved the forger's style, and he has produced specimens of his skill which might deceive even the elect.

He has gradually enlarged the sphere of his operations. He puts on the market a number of books worthless in themselves, but enriched with autographs of great men, or the bookplates of famous collectors, with a note of the many guineas which it was said to have fetched at such and such a sale. He is not content now to exhibit the originals of edited matter, but he composes and discovers unpublished poems of Burns himself. His last exploits have been unusually bold. James Macpherson, of "Ossian" fame, published in his "Original Papers" (1775) a letter, purporting to have been written by Claverhouse, after the battle of Killiecrankie, and describing the engagement. Critics pointed out that it was a forgery, for Claverhouse was carried mortally wounded from the battlefield. The Edinburgh genius, forgetting the facts, now introduces to the citizens of Dundee the original autograph of the hero. It was only a few days ago that Mr. Mackenzie, the Edinburgh chemist, whose name is prominent in the affair as a large collector and trader in Burns's MSS., challenged the critics to dispute the genuineness of a hitherto unknown production of the poet, entitled "The Poor Man's Prayer."

Mr. Mackenzie claimed to be the proud and happy possessor of the original manuscript of this veritable Burns. It now appears that the poem, or an extract from it, was published by "Simon Hedge, labourer," in the *London Magazine* of 1766, when Burns was seven years old.

It is scarcely conceivable that such a state of things should have been so long tolerated in a city of ripe scholars, wealthy collectors, and shrewd men of business. Five years ago a mass of Jacobite documents was advertised for sale in an Edinburgh auction room. To satisfy the doubts thrown upon them the auctioneer was induced to send some specimens for examination to the MS. department of the British Museum. They were returned, it is said, with the curt endorsement, "forgeries at a glance." "It is clear," exclaimed the disappointed

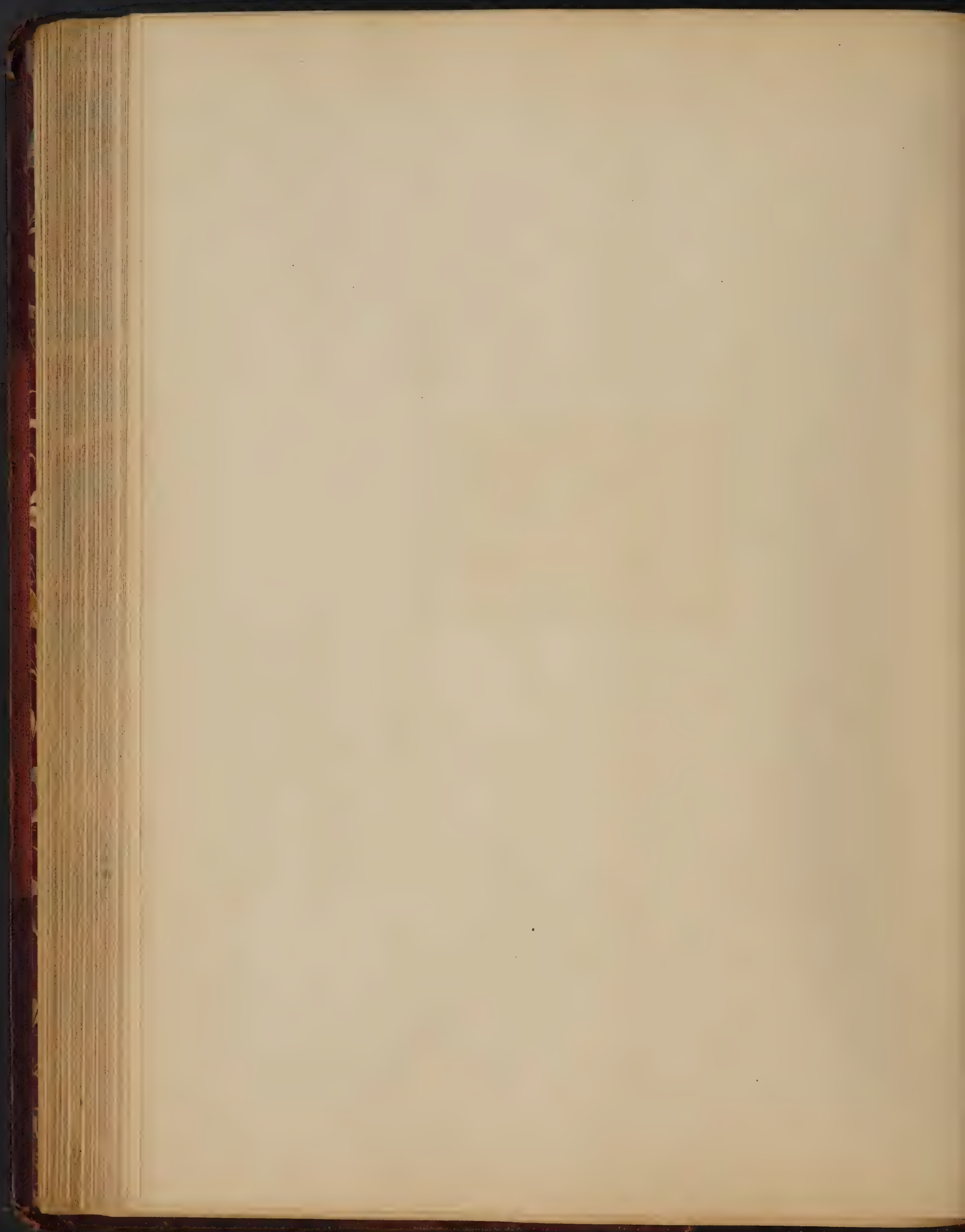




auctioneer, "that the British Museum had given no time or care to the examination." This was five years ago.

The timidity, or apathy, of the dupes is exasperating. A gentleman had given £10 for an autograph poem of Burns, which the seller declared had been in his possession for twenty years. It proved to be spurious. The purchaser was pressed to put the matter into the hands of the police. He declined, chiefly on the ground that it might get into trouble a respected elder of his church. The names of all the persons concerned in the diffusion of the MSS., genuine or false, have been whispered in private from the beginning. Only within the last few days have they been put into print by the adventurous *Dispatch*. Are there no detectives in Edinburgh? Her fair fame is at stake.

It is not to the credit of any community that swindling transactions to this extent should continue for a number of years undetected. Two years ago a single detective, with the assistance of an expert in handwriting, could have unearthed the whole fraud. Meanwhile the damage done is well-nigh irreparable, and the principal culprit and his accomplices are still at large.





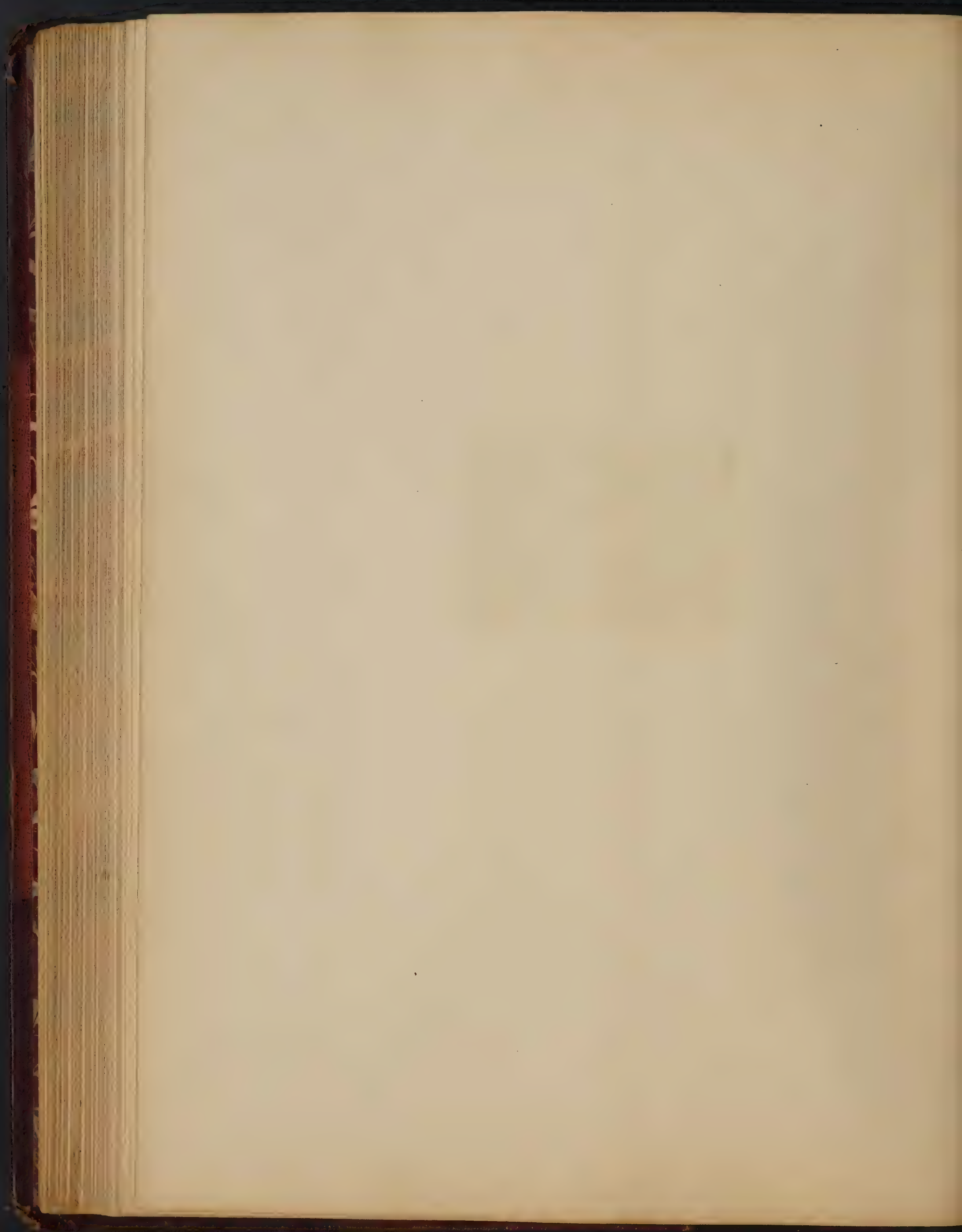
## Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.

EDINBURGH, TUESDAY, November 29, 1892.

### SUMMARY OF TO-DAY'S NEWS.

SMITH, the forger of the Burns and Scott MSS., has, in conversation, admitted that he supplied bogus documents; but he declines to make a clean breast of the matter in the meantime.

We publish to-day some more interesting testimony about the forgeries.





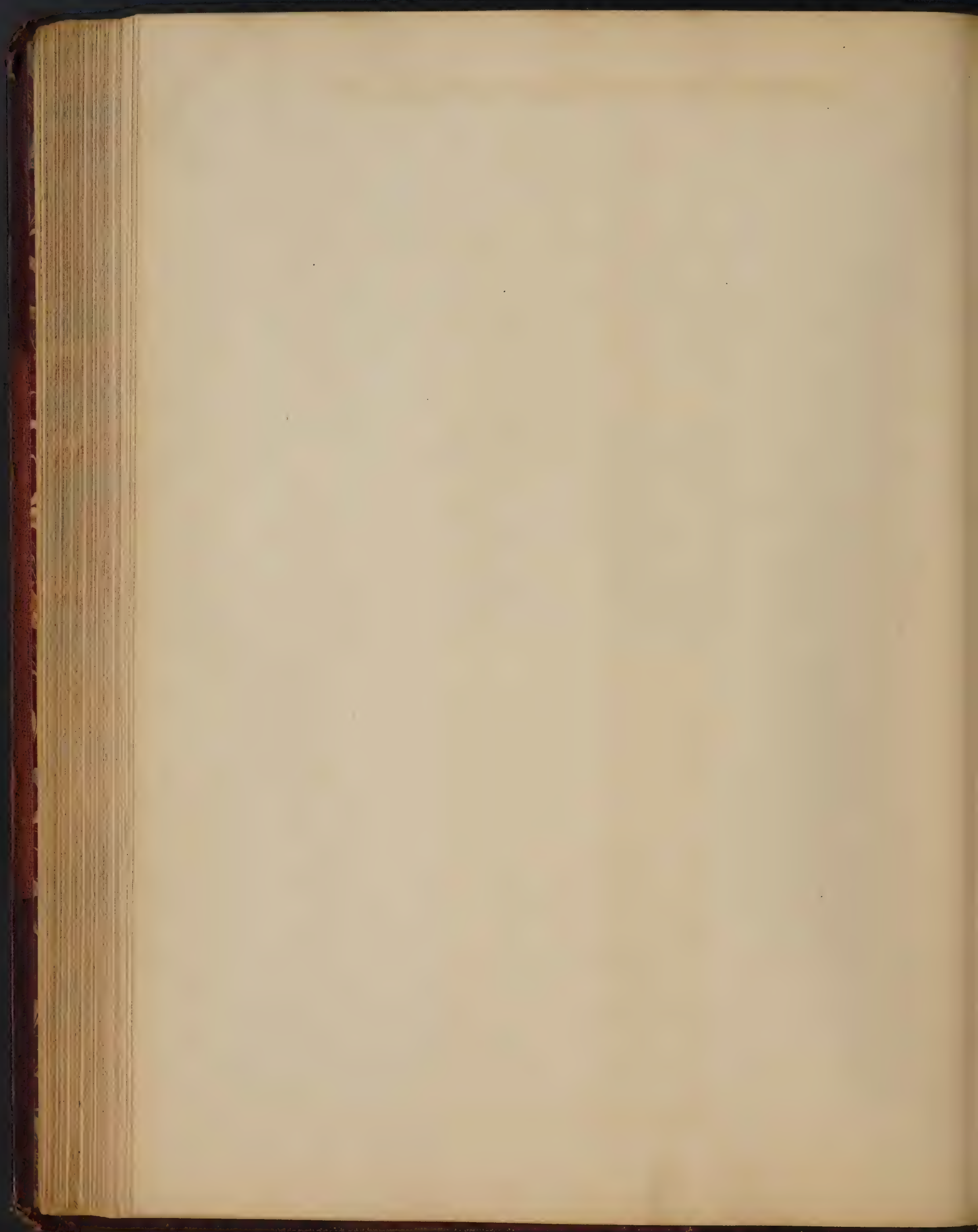
## Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.

EDINBURGH, WEDNESDAY, Nov. 30, 1892.

### SUMMARY OF TO-DAY'S NEWS.

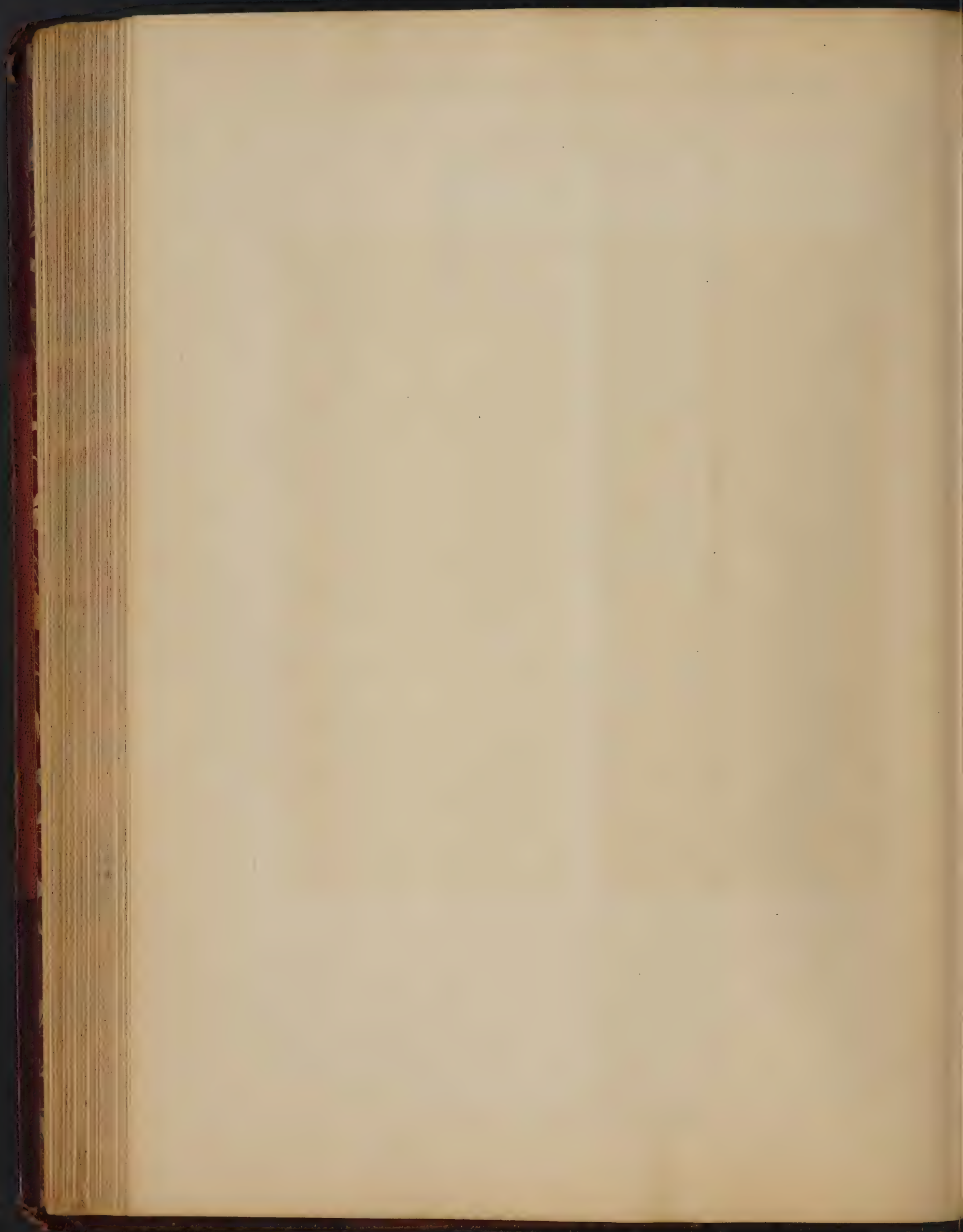
We publish to-day an interesting letter from Mr Colvill-Scott, giving an account of his interview with Mr Mackenzie.

It has now been ascertained that Smith, the forger of the MSS., pawned in his own name the batch from which we selected the *fac-simile*.





SMITH'S virtual confession of the Great Manuscript Forgeries must be a bitter pill for the Mackenzies, the Browns, and the Stillies to swallow. Despite their foolish obstinacy and significant silence, the question has now been settled so far as the outside public can settle it, and many of the documents in which these "specialists" have been "interested" for many years are proved to be not worth the paper on which they are written. Paper, however, is cheap—especially to a man in the employment of a law stationer. We do not wish, however, to add to the remorseful feelings which the misguided gentlemen we have named must now be labouring under. Let us repeat again that we have no reason, so far as our own inquiries have gone, to doubt but that each of them acted in the firm faith that he had discovered a great treasure. Of their judgment and disastrous carelessness we need say nothing. But the bubble is now burst. It was easily pricked, for the means of doing it had only to be sought for, and the supply was found to be limitless. The magnitude of the business thus carried on for so long a period is a point which distinguishes it from all previous cases of literary forgery. The attempts of Ireland and other nimble-fingered gentry were few and far between, and the results of their efforts were easily collected and branded as spurious for all time coming. But in the present case the forgeries come not "in single spies, but in battalions"—they are scattered in their hundreds, nay in their thousands, over the world. Mr Angus has found batches of them in London, Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle, Glasgow, Dundee, and other towns in the kingdom; the London auctioneers testify that they have had large bundles of the spurious literature forwarded to them from various places in the three kingdoms; and we know that immense quantities have been exported to America and the colonies. This is a very serious matter for those who are fortunate enough to have the genuine article in their possession; and in their interests we would make a suggestion, that in connection with the forthcoming Glasgow Exhibition in commemoration of the centenary of the death of Burns, a committee of competent gentlemen should be appointed to take measures for the elimination of all base and doubtful documents, and to *catalogue* and endorse as genuine those regarding the genuineness of which there is not the slightest dubiety. This would not only be advantageous to the present holders of genuine Burns documents, but it would be for the protection of future collectors, who could safely accept as satisfactory the committee's seal of genuineness attached to any manuscript, and purchase any such items offered to them with every confidence. A stamp of this description would effectively dispose of the pretensions of "Rosebuds," "Poor Men's Prayers," and other Smith concoctions of falsehood, writ fine—too fine—and large.





## THE MSS. FRAUDS.

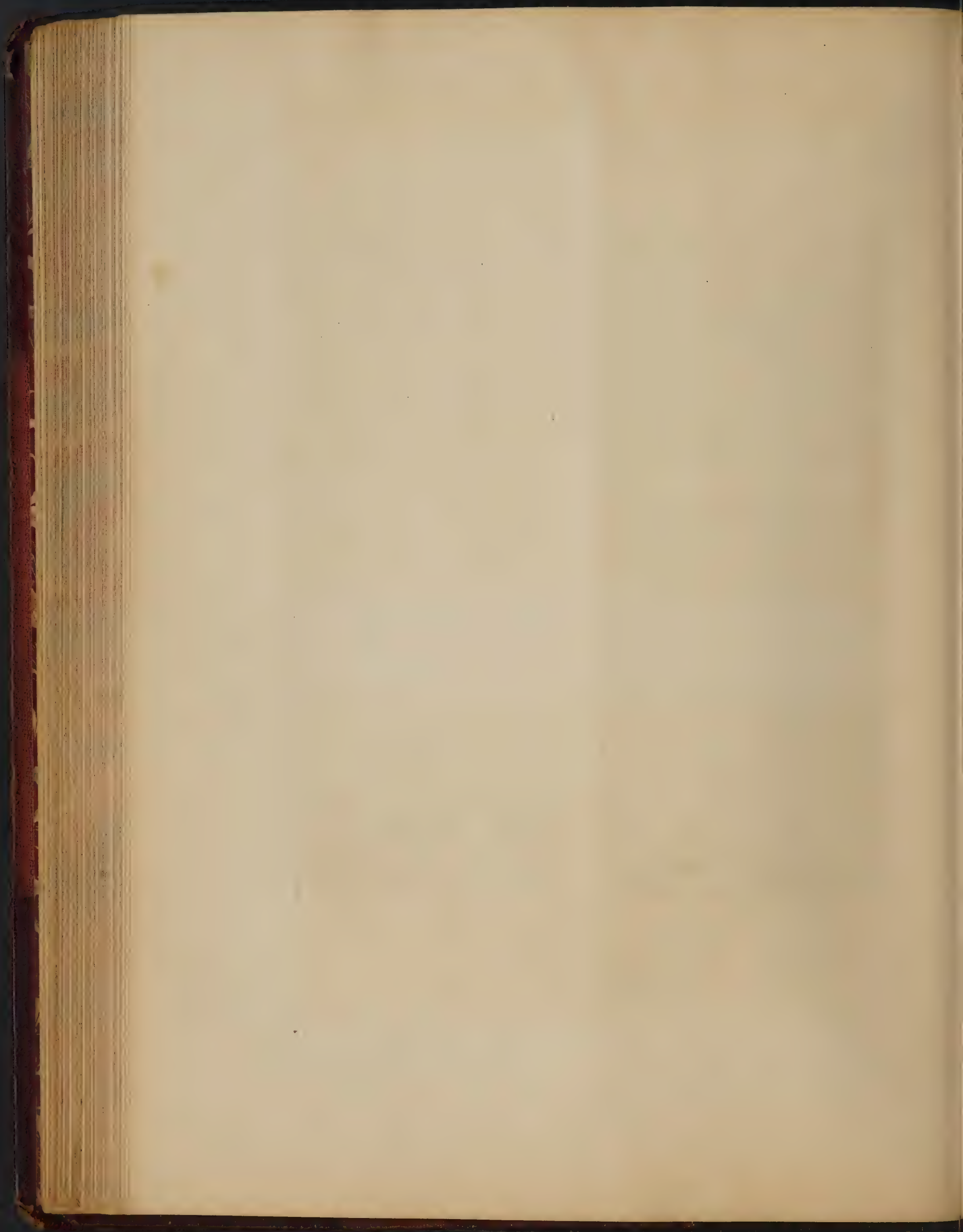
### SOME ADDITIONAL ACCOUNT OF THE FORGER'S CAREER.

As we stated yesterday Alexander H. Smith, the MSS. Forger, was brought up as an apprentice in a law office in town, and ultimately became a sort of chief clerk to the late Mr Ferrier, S.S.C., who was the last representative of a firm which had had a long and honourable connection with several of the leading families in Scotland. The Ferrier connection has, indeed, been put forward as accounting for a great many of the spurious documents which have been floated so successfully upon unsuspecting purchasers during the last few years. The story diligently put about by those interested is that in connection with the clearance of the cellars of the Ferrier establishment some six or seven years ago, what are described as whole boxfuls of old documents were brought to light. Mr Ferrier is reputed to have told Smith to clear out the rubbish, and Smith, it is said, knowing that they were of value, made a selection from the stuff which was thus put under his care. The exact circumstances are perhaps only now known to Smith himself, but as he left Mr Ferrier under unpleasant circumstances it is not likely that he had an opportunity of clearing out the whole of the old papers, as has been alleged by some of his defenders. Besides, it is asserted that Mr Ferrier himself, on discovering that there was a market for old law papers in Sir Walter Scott's handwriting, sold a few of them, but it is improbable that there was anything of general interest beyond the handwriting in the papers. Among the Smith batches of forgeries there is found an occasional law paper or unimportant letter of Sir Walter's that is admitted by high authorities to be undoubtedly genuine. Obviously, however, the Ferrier archives were very unlikely to contain the host of manuscripts and autographs which Smith succeeded in placing upon the market and are now to be found, not only in the hands of collectors all over the United Kingdom, but also in America and the Colonies. One of the most perplexing features in the case is how skilled tradesmen were led to believe that all these manuscripts, and not manuscripts merely, but books bearing the handwriting of men and women prominent in the history of England and Scotland for the past few hundred years, should have come from an obscure

source without any attempt being made, so far as we know, to trace their history.

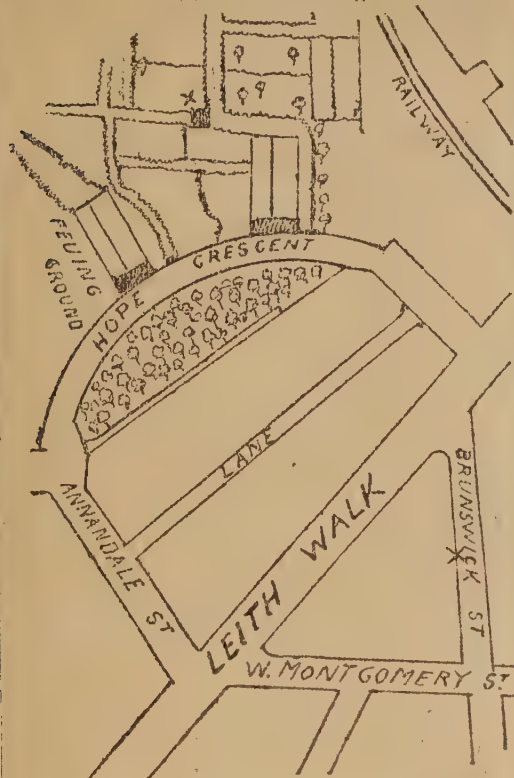
Smith himself seemed to be alive to the danger of offering his wares too frequently in person, and therefore he had recourse to the help of some of his friends. Thus in one case which we have been informed of by an Edinburgh tradesman, a man named B—, a friend of Smith's, who had executed various commissions for the latter, called and offered certain documents, alleging that they had been in his possession for a considerable number of years, that his sister was part owner of the lot; and that it would be necessary for him to consult his sister, who was said to live in a small town in the vicinity of Edinburgh, as to the price of the manuscripts. The dealer was taken in and paid a considerable sum of money, part of it, fortunately, for the purposes of this inquiry, by cheque, the part of which returned to the bank from him he still holds in his possession. The dealer had no suspicions of the documents until one day he saw Smith and the seller in company on the Chain Pier at Trinity, and then it began to dawn upon him that probably there was a connection between the two men. He immediately took steps to have his manuscripts tested, and sent them to London to an authority there. This gentleman returned the documents with the statement that the whole of them were spurious, with one small exception. This was a scrap of a letter by Dickens. They included MSS. of Burns, Scott, Hogg, Oliver Cromwell, and many other noted personages whose names have been forged and palmed off upon an unsuspecting public by Smith. We have seen this batch of documents, and they are identical in all respects with the mass of manuscripts of a spurious character which have come into our possession since this inquiry was opened. There is not the slightest doubt that the person who wrote the documents of which we have already given samples, also wrote the documents by which this dealer was so completely victimised.

A large part of the pretended Ferrier manuscripts were sold for "Bristo" Brown at Chapman's in November 1887, and those who take an interest in these matters well remember that suspicion was thrown upon the whole collection at that time; and though some people were inclined to take the documents upon trust, and to purchase, nothing like the prices were realised at that sale which would have been secured had the documents been without suspicion. Since then the bulk of the documents now in question passed through the hands of Mr A. Brown, Bristo Place, as agent for Mr Smith; and it was from the same shop that Mr Mackenzie got his "collection." Mr Brown is also understood to have purchased some documents directly from the Ferrier family and holds a receipt covering that transaction.





After the Ferrier office was closed, Smith, who in the circle in which he moved was known as "Antique" Smith, from always having some old article to dispose of, is heard of in various quarters, moving about here and there, and ultimately drifting down to a little summer house in connection with the model gardens for a

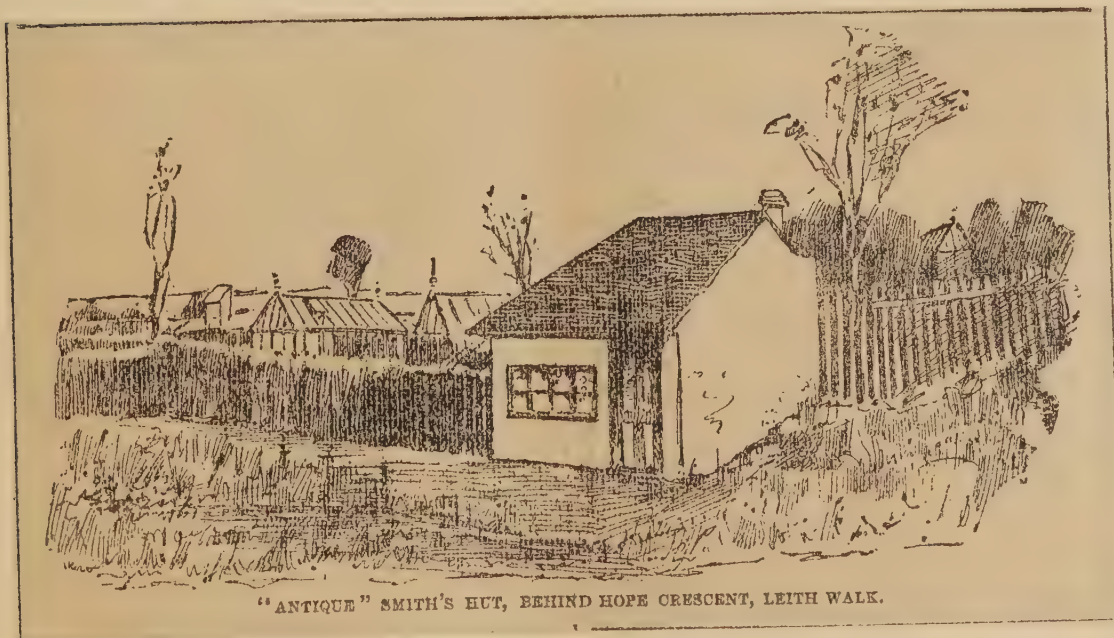


GROUND PLAN SHOWING SITE OF HUT.

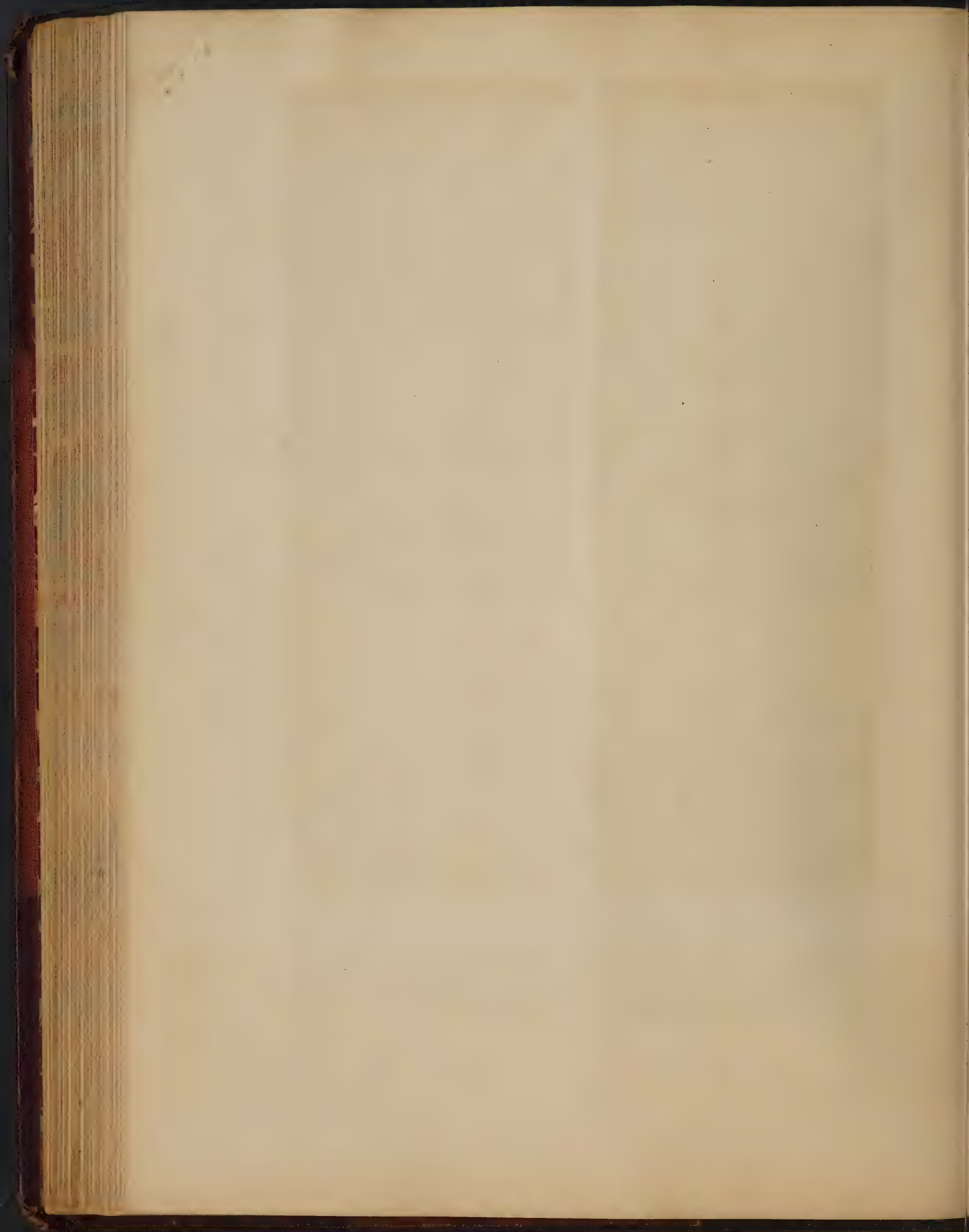
residence (a sketch of which we give.) Here he lived alone, or at all events occasionally with either one friend or another, who was useful in occasionally assisting Smith in the disposal of manuscripts or other articles. Whether he wrote the forgeries here or in his lodgings, which he also occupied occasionally, is uncertain, but there is reason to believe that at least some of them were executed in the lodgings, while the painting operations seem to have been chiefly carried on in the hut.

Everything seems to have been regarded as grist to Antique Smith's Mill. We hear of him offering all sorts of articles for sale, from yellow tea-pots to swords, sax-horns, and guns, and even it is said he did a bit of dealing in pictures, though whether he was the painter of them himself, or if he got a friend to do them for him, is not quite clear. The evidence is rather in favour of the former view. Some say that Smith had actually a turn for water-colours, and could do something with his brush in that way. In any case stories are afloat of marvellous "Wintours" and "Orchard-sons," and pictures by Scottish water-colour artists being offered by him, or by some go-between, to dealers for marvellously small prices. These were all presumably signed pictures, but considering all that is known regarding the documents, the greatest suspicion may be said to exist as to whether the artists whose names they bore had ever seen them or would have recognised them if they had done so. We hear of one dealer who was offered a pretended set of water-colour drawings by one of the best young water-colour artists of the Scottish School, having turned the vendor to the door and threatened him with the police if he came back with such stuff. Smith has always been regarded as a mystery man by collectors. He could rarely be traced, the University Librarian narrating yesterday how he and the Librarian of the Signet Library endeavoured to communicate with him, but in vain. By his acquaintances, however, he could readily be discovered in certain public-houses to which he regularly resorted. When occasionally employed in copying his habit usually was not to appear until the afternoon, his explanation being that he was engaged in the forenoon in dealing in old books.

It is known that he sent documents to London, but



"ANTIQUE" SMITH'S HUT, BEHIND HOPE CRESCENT, LEITH WALK.



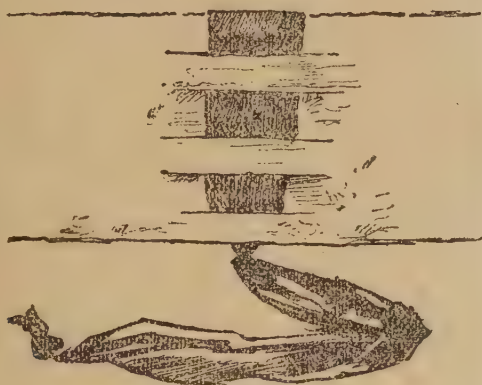


there is reason to believe that the success he met with there was of a very different kind from that which he received in some quarters in Edinburgh.

Since our interview with the manager of the Equitable Loan Company we learn from another source that all the documents pawned there were pledged by Smith in his own name.

#### A PRINCE CHARLIE "PERMIT."

Some months ago, it may be remembered, Mr Mackenzie presented the Town Council of Edinburgh—for preservation in the Corporation museum—with a "permit," purporting to have been granted by the Prince Regent at Holyrood on 15th October 1745, in favour of Captain Thomas Schaw, "to pass from this place to Kilmarnock upon his own lawful business." The document, which is in parchment, is written in a clear, bold hand, has attached to it a



THE BLUE RIBBAND.

piece of dark blue ribbon which may or may not have at one time carried a wax seal, and has altogether a modern appearance. However, it was received in the usual courteous way, and duly deposited in the museum, the donor, it need scarcely be said, being thanked for the gift. Since then the "permit" has been seen, no doubt, by many an interested visitor to the City Chambers. In the course of Monday the document was brought under the notice of Dr Joseph Anderson, the secretary to the Society of Antiquaries, whose thorough knowledge of manuscripts no one will seek to question—except Mr Mackenzie. Dr Anderson, who had no notion whatever as to the ownership of the document, or where it had come from, inspected it very minutely by the aid of magnifying glasses. At the close of his examination Dr Anderson simply observed that "if the document were offered to him he would not have it." He suggested that Dr Dickson, keeper of records, Register House, might be consulted as to the bit of ribbon above referred to. That gentleman was afterwards seen, but he was unable to offer any opinion regarding the ribbon from the fact that there is no instance of the kind now remaining in his custody. In the course of some general conversation on the subject of MSS. of

eminent persons, Dr Dickson pointed to the difficulty there was of pronouncing an opinion offhand as to the genuineness or otherwise of such documents, there being so many things to be considered and weighed against each other. There were other manuscripts, however, in reference to which there was not the same difficulty in deciding, and, curiously enough, since the correspondence began to appear in the *Dispatch* a number of documents have been submitted to Dr Dickson for his opinion, and several of them were readily found to be spurious.

Charles, P. R.

#### THE SIGNATURE.

As to the matter of date, it may be worthy of note that while the above "permit" bears to have been granted on 15th October, the *Scots Magazine* of October 1745 contains a paragraph to this effect—"Notice was sent on the 19th to the soldiers who had been wounded at the late battle, and had been taken care of in the Royal Infirmary, charity workhouse, and other places, that such of them as would vow not to carry arms against the House of Stuart or their allies before the 1st of January 1747, should get a pass to carry them home to their native countries."

#### MR COLVILL-SCOTT AND MR MACKENZIE.

#### "THE ENCHANTED CABINET."

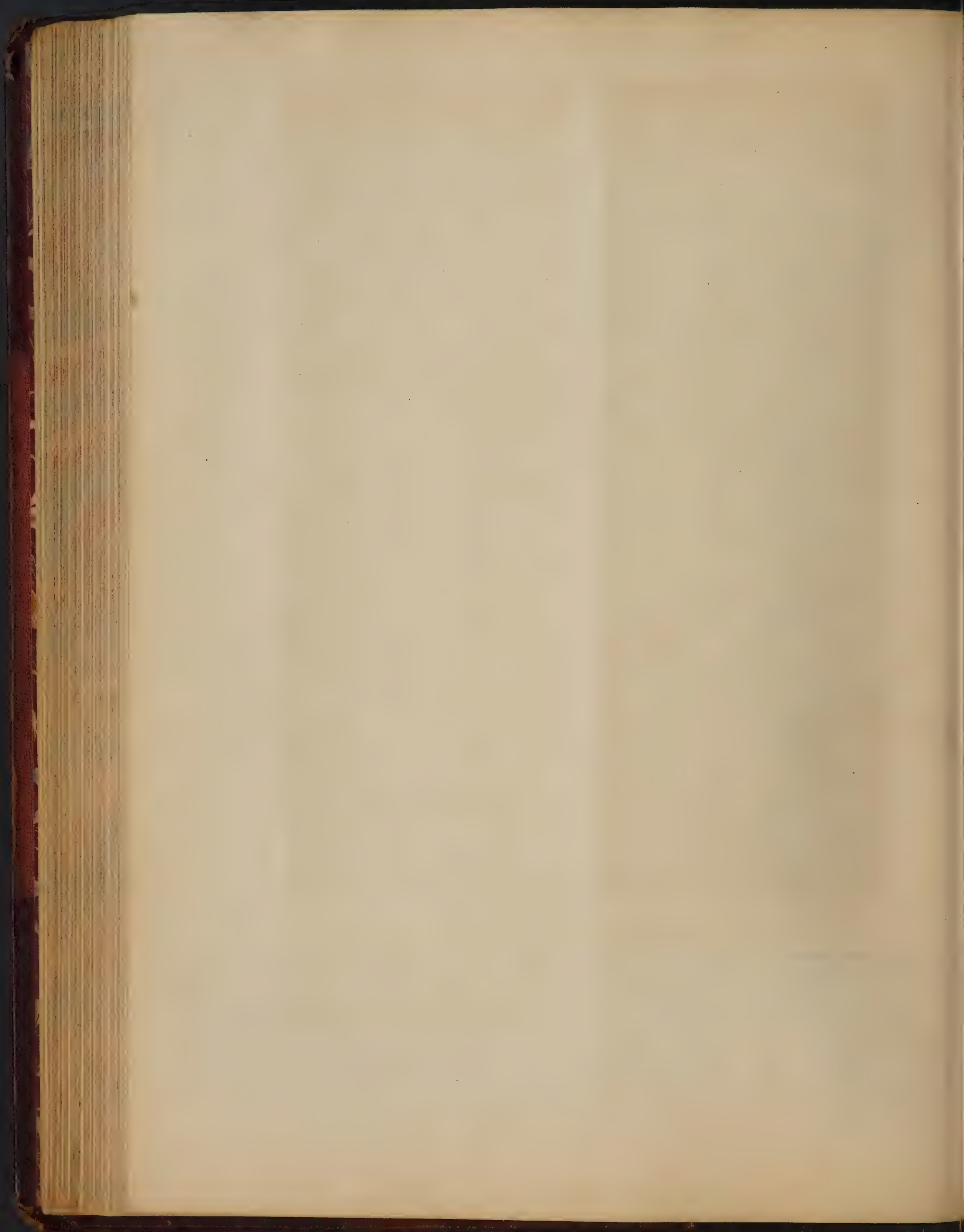
[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."] *See 1892*

Arts and Letters Club,

4 Grafton Street, London, W.

SIR,—The thanks of all honest men are due to you for bringing to the better notice of the public the scandalous literary forgeries emanating from Edinburgh, and which have been engaging the attention of several gentlemen north and south of the Tweed for some time past. As you have reprinted certain letters of mine to the *Cummock Express*, and the last one which Mr Mackenzie, of 45 Forrest Road, Edinburgh, inserted in that paper, I hope, by your courtesy, to make a few comments on the same. Mr Mackenzie's last effusion in the *Cummock Express* is characterised by offensive personalities rather than sound logic. He says, however, it was in an "innocent moment" that he sent his "John Hill" letter to the *Cummock Express*, and then states that that correspondence has been continued so long as to become tiresome to the readers of the paper. Surely he does not imagine that in these days, when one can purchase a library for sixpence, people are going to read what does not interest them or has become tiresome! But why Mr Mackenzie's silence? This "John Hill" letter must be traced, if none of his descendants can be. As far as the public are concerned, it is for them, and, being one, I ask the owner to give the name of the person from whom he got it.

Charles, Prince of Wales & Regent of Scotland, England  
France and Ireland and the Dominions therewith belonging  
To





It is strange that a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries (Scotland) should give so little aid in a matter of antiquarian interest and public importance when it is perfectly within his power so to do.

Mr Mackenzie ridicules the fact that the experts to be found in our national institutions are capable of discriminating between a genuine autograph document and a piece of worthless paper. How unpatriotic! And another gentleman recommends a lithographer! He overlooks the fact that it is a matter of judging the paper, the ink, the seals, and post-marks, if any, and the writing itself, and then, last but not least, the composition.

Mr Mackenzie makes much of the fact of my having shown him, at his own request, some very suspicious-looking specimens which I took with me to compare with the quantity of documents which he showed to myself and Mr Craibe Angus; but he forgets to mention that I showed him some genuine MSS., and that he could not, or would not, express his opinion which were right and which were wrong.

On another occasion of calling on Mr Mackenzie at his shop, I heard from his own lips the following:—On asking him personally where he discovered his MSS., he gave me to understand that, being a kind of general collector of all sorts of things, from MSS. to candlesticks and furniture, he was shown one day a desk or cabinet, and on looking over it, naturally enough, previous to purchasing, he suddenly touched an invisible spring when lo! hey presto! out flew a drawer filled with MSS. of Burns, &c. Having drawn the attention of the owner to the fact, he decided to make an offer for the MSS., and purchased it; but told me, when closely pressed, that he did not buy the desk wherein this peculiar discovery was made, and which might be called the Enchanted Cabinet.

Here was a wonderful discovery of valuable MSS.—an historical fact in the annals of the literary world; and so struck was I at the time, that I proposed that Mr Mackenzie should furnish the Society of Antiquaries with the details of it in the form of a paper before them, or in some other way for the matter on record. But my proposal was sarcastically ridiculed! Why?

Before concluding, I would like to say that I think the letter of Mr A. B. Todd, the editor of the *Cumnock Express*, contains a strange suggestion as to the public getting "Jeddart justice"—aided by the "friend in Court"—from the British Museum, and the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh. I am sorry that an editor should suggest such a thing. It stamps his letter as being unworthy of any further notice. One remark, however, is worthy of notice—he refers to the correspondence in the *Cumnock Express* as relating to certain "alleged Burns MSS." He is getting on.

In concluding this letter I wish to refer to that valuable journal the *Archivist*, devoted to the study of historical documents, MSS., and autograph letters, and published at 47 Great Russell Street, London. There, in the number for December, at the end of an article on Burns correspondence, is the following:—

"It may not be out of place to reiterate the warning we have so often given to our readers against being victimised by the wholesale forgeries of Burns letters. These fabrications are being offered to collectors in the most barefaced way. It is a pity that Burns, who when living loved honesty and truth, should after his death have his name associated with lies and fraud. Will it require another Address from a great poet 'To the Sons of Burns' to stop this iniquity and expose

These letters, false beyond all forgery—  
Not just handwriting and mere authorship,  
But false to body and soul they figure forth?"

Thanking you in anticipation of the insertion of this letter.—I am, &c. H. D. COLVILL-SCOTT.

## WHAT IS TO BE DONE WITH THE FORGED MSS.?

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

SIR,—Now that this deplorable business of the forged MSS. has been fairly exposed by you, it is time, I think, to ask with the casuists, *Quid agendum in casu?* What practical action is to be taken? The protection of the public in future from the nefarious practices of Mr Smith, and the, in some respects, still more guilty traffic of his patrons and accomplices, may be left to the police. We may only wonder that a wholesale and notorious swindling transaction of this kind should have been allowed to continue for five years unpunished. But what is to be done with the spurious MSS.—the sackfuls which have miraculously issued from the secret drawer of Mr Mackenzie's mysterious cabinet, the bundle of Jacobite papers pronounced by the British Museum to be forgeries, and the rest of the pile? That is a matter which touches the conscience of the possessors. Should we not do as Savonarola did with the improper books which were contaminating the fair fame of Florence, have a huge bonfire, say, in the Meadows, a veritable *auto da fe*, into the flames of which every honest man should cast all that he possesses of the vile paper?

If the veteran Mr Stillie, Mr Mackenzie, F.S.A. Scot., and the "Scotch gentleman in straitened circumstances," who has "exhausted his fortune in collecting literary curiosities," would lead the way in thus disgorging their unhappily false wares, others would undoubtedly follow their good example.

Surely something should be done to guarantee us against the periodical reappearance of this trash in the market to the continued disgrace of the city and its trade.—I am, &c. JUSTITIA.

## THE EDITOR OF THE CUMNOCK EXPRESS EXPLAINS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

*Express Office, Cumnock, November 29, 1892.*

SIR,—Mr W. C. Angus having made pointed though most courteous, allusion to me in connection with the appearance of "the John Hill letter" in the columns of the *Express*, allow me to say that Mr Angus is slightly mistaken in saying that at the time I was favoured with his visit I had then to ask permission from Mr Mackenzie to print the letter. Mr Mackenzie gave me permission to do so when he sent me the MS. for perusal. When I had done so, and made a copy of it for our paper, I was, however, to return it to him, and not to let it out of my possession. I had it in my possession at the time Mr Angus visited me, and certainly would have allowed him to see it, had it then been in my mind. His time, however, was so short, and the conversation on other literary matters so deeply interesting, that I forgot all about the M.S. letter; and it was not until we were nearing the railway station, nearly a mile away, that I remembered it, and told him of it. Mr Angus regretted much that he had not seen it, and asked me to send it to him for a day, and it would be safely and at once returned. I had no doubt of this, but to have done so would have been a breach of faith, and I refused to send it, and at once returned it to Mr Mackenzie.

Mr Angus having assured me that the forgeries of Burns and other MSS. in existence were numerous, and that he had no doubt but that the "John Hill letter" was one of them, I, therefore, afterwards looked at it more narrowly, and though concluding it still to be genuine, candour and an anxious desire that the full truth as to these MSS. may be elicited, I have to state what I found in regard to it. The sheet of paper on which it was written was what—when I was at school more than half a century ago—we called common post, but of much larger size, and quite like what could have been made out of a





leaf taken from a folio book. I noticed, too, that the serrated or rather the *cut* edges on one side had a slight check in at one part, which, however, may have escaped the observation of Mr Mackenzie. I thought, however, that Burns *might* have written the letter on just such a leaf, as I have done so myself on more than one occasion. What I also noticed was, that the ink was faint as if from age, but of a pale *milky* faintness, and not of a *brownish* sort, as I to-day observe on the paper containing the dates of the births of my father's fifteen children, the first date of which is 13th May 1796, only some ten years after that of the "John Hill letter." Twelve of these markings are in the beautiful handwriting of Andrew Noble, the session-clerk of Manchin—*he* who also made the entries in the session books when Burns and Jean Armour appeared before the session and were rebuked by "Daddy Auld" for their delinquencies, as was kindly shown me by the late Rev. Dr Edgar, of Manchin.

The writing, however, and especially that of the "Lines on a Rosebud," was so thoroughly like that of Burns that, till the articles in the *Dispatch* appeared, I had no doubt of their being genuine. And from what I know and have seen of Mr Mackenzie, I am perfectly certain that both he and Mr Stillie believed them to be as genuine as I did; though, possibly, now their faith, like mine, may be at least rather beginning to be shaken.

Can it be that not only John Hill but a Mr Haig, of Kilmanock, also, to whom Burns is said to have sent one of his poems, are only *myths*? Mr Stillie asked me to find out, if possible, some trace of this Mr Haig; but though I made the most careful inquiries in many of the most likely quarters, I was utterly unsuccessful in both cases.

A word on Mr Mackenzie's alleged connection with the Peden Monument. That consisted only in his kind offer to seal the bottle hermetically which was placed in the foundation, and place some *printed* documents relating to Alexander Peden inside when he did so, the *only writing* being a narrative of the memorial movement from my pen, so that the reporter of the *Cummock News* need not, and should not attempt to, throw out any insinuations against Mr Mackenzie regarding that good work; while all the part that gentleman of the *News* took in or connected with the monument to that grand and *weird* old Covenant of undying fame was to put in an appearance at the inauguration of his memorial here, at Cummock, and at the cake and wine banquet which followed the impressive ceremony.—I am, &c.

A. B. TODD.

P.S.—I had intended for some time past to give an account of a relic of Burns in my possession, compared with which these letters—even though they should be found to be genuine—are but trifles. I think it better to wait, however, until all this feverish excitement concerning the disputed MSS. has abated.

A. B. T.

#### THE HONOUR OF EDINBURGH MUST BE VINDICATED.

[FROM THE LONDON HAWK.]

The most amazing feature of the extraordinary literary frauds, which have long been a disgrace to "the Modern Athens," and which are now being tardily exposed in the columns of the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, is the impunity with which the forger has been allowed, and apparently still allowed, to carry on his scandalous trade. Several years ago it was well-known to experts that a mass of suspected documents, Jacobite papers, letters of Burns, Scott, &c., were being thrown upon the market by private sale, through pawnbrokers and obscure booksellers, or in the public auction rooms. Quantities went to America and the Colonies; some went to London. Respectable booksellers and private collectors in Edinburgh spent large sums upon them. The flow has continued ever since. The source seems inexhaustible. The marks of spuriousness and fraud, and the identity of the handiwork, were patent on many documents, which were clumsily designed. But long practice and the encouragement received from his patrons have improved the forger's style, and he has produced specimens of his skill which might deceive even the elect.

He has gradually enlarged the sphere of his operations. He puts on the market a number of books worthless in themselves, but enriched with autographs of great men, or the bookplates of famous collectors, with a note of the many guineas which it was said to have fetched at such and such a sale. He is not content now to exhibit the originals of edited matter, but he composes and discovers unpublished poems of Burns himself. His last exploits

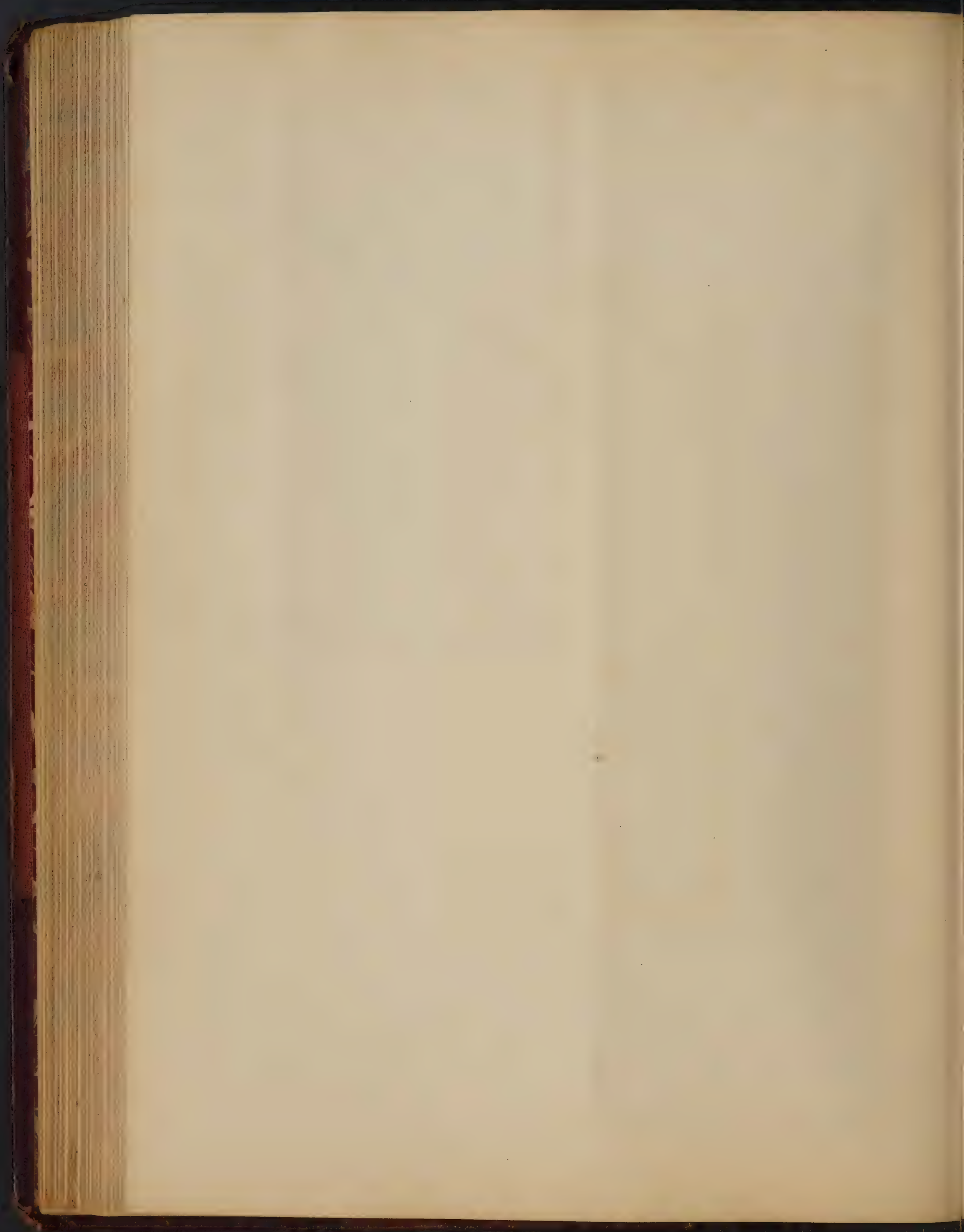
have been unusually bold. James Macpherson, of "Ossian" fame, published in his "Original Papers" (1775) a letter, purporting to have been written by Claverhouse, after the battle of Killiecrankie, and describing the engagement. Critics pointed out that it was a forgery, for Claverhouse was carried mortally wounded from the battlefield. The Edinburgh genius, forgetting the facts, now introduces to the citizens of Dundee the original autograph of the hero. It was only a few days ago that Mr Mackenzie, the Edinburgh chemist, whose name is prominent in the affair as a large collector and trader in Burns MSS., challenged the critics to dispute the genuineness of a hitherto unknown production of the poet, entitled "The Poor Man's Prayer."

Mr Mackenzie claimed to be the proud and happy possessor of the original manuscript of this veritable Burns. It now appears that the poem or an extract from it was published by "Simon Hedge, labourer," in the *London Magazine* of 1766, when Burns was seven years old.

It is scarcely conceivable that such a state of things should have been so long tolerated in a city of ripe scholars, wealthy collectors, and shrewd men of business. Five years ago a mass of Jacobite documents was advertised for sale in an Edinburgh auction room. To satisfy the doubts thrown upon them the auctioneer was induced to send some specimens for examination to the MS. department of the British Museum. They were returned, it is said, with the curt endorsement, "forgeries at a glance." This was five years ago.

The timidity, or apathy, of the dupes is exasperating. A gentleman had given £10 for an autograph poem of Burns, which the seller declared had been in his possession for twenty years. It proved to be spurious. The purchaser was pressed to put the matter into the hands of the police. He declined, chiefly on the ground that it might get into trouble a respected elder of his church. The names of all the persons concerned in the diffusion of the MSS., genuine or false, have been whispered in private from the beginning. Only within the last few days have they been put into print by the adventurous *Dispatch*. Are there no detectives in Edinburgh? Her fair fame is at stake.

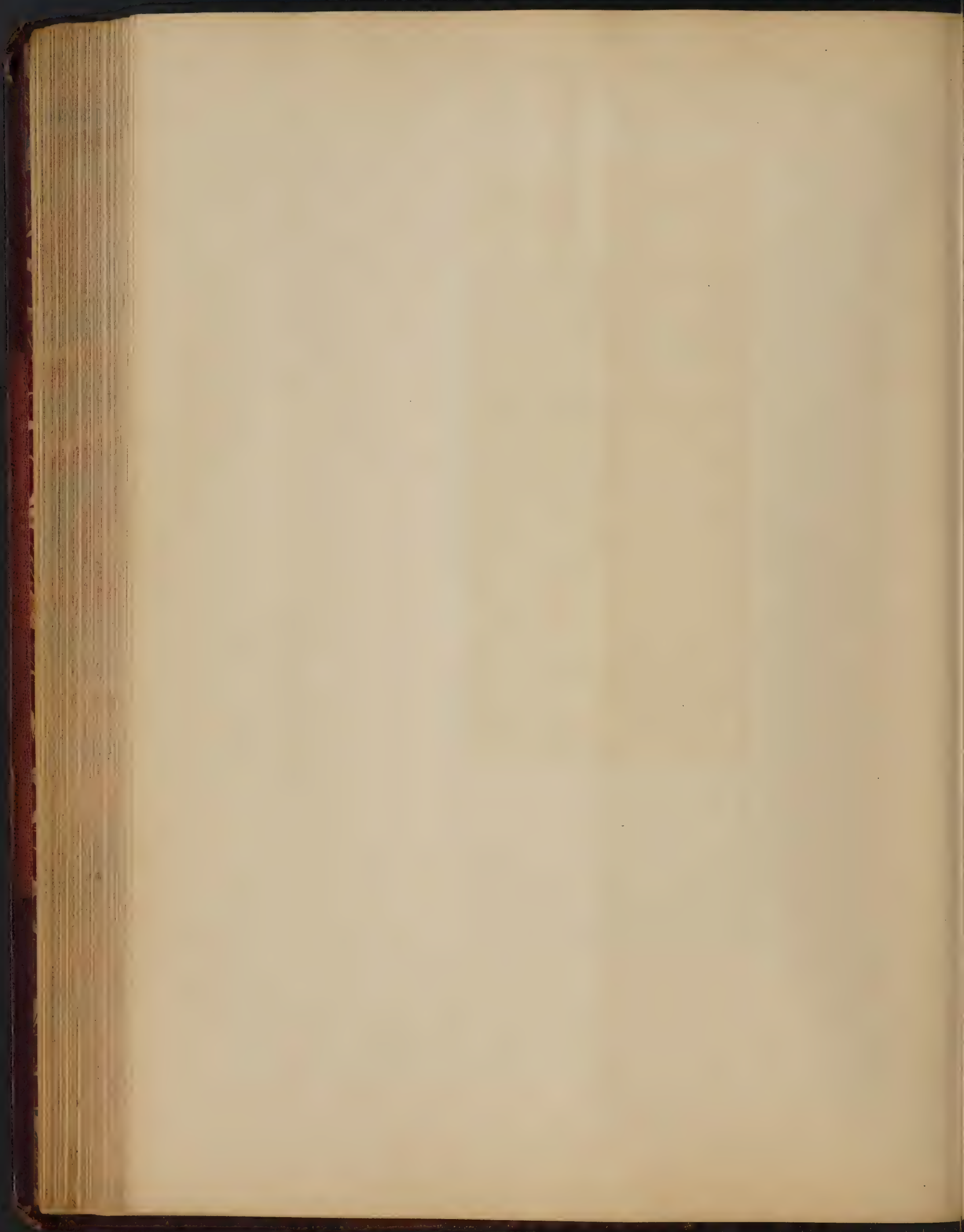
It is not to the credit of any community that swindling transactions to this extent should continue for a number of years undetected. Two years ago a single detective, with the assistance of an expert in handwriting, could have unearthed the whole fraud. Meanwhile the damage done is well-nigh irreparable, and the principal culprit and his accomplices are still at large.





LITERARY RELICS.

A letter written by Robert Burns was sold yesterday for £15. At the same time and place five letters from the same hand fetched £34, while two of the poet's manuscripts brought in £12 and £10 10s. respectively. These figures show how large are the prices obtained for genuine literary relics. It so happens that much doubt has lately been cast upon the reality of the documents of this sort submitted for sale from time to time, by discoveries which have just taken place in Edinburgh. A collector had sent to an Ayrshire paper a copy of two poems purporting to be the work of Burns, and hitherto unpublished. One of these was called "The Poor Man's Prayer." It was sad twaddle, and had it proceeded from Burns would have done something to lower the poet's reputation. But it has been made clear that it was not the production of Burns. One of the officials of the Advocates' Library has traced the verses, and more of the same sort, to the *London Magazine* of 1766—a year in which Burns was of the tender age of seven. Nevertheless, in the course of "The Poor Man's Prayer," the speaker talks of "seeing round his knees his prattling children play." If, therefore, Burns had composed these lines, he must have been, in a sense, considerably "more than seven"—he must have been a youngster of very remarkably precocity in all respects. Of course, this *exposé* has created something like a sensation in Scottish circles, where anything relating to the national poet is naturally regarded with the keenest, not to say the most superstitious, interest. There is some reason to believe that, of late, there has been a widespread traffic in forged documents of the kind described—documents, nevertheless, issued at such a price that the collecting public necessarily had its suspicions promptly aroused. The incident will no doubt have at least the good effect of enlightening the hitherto purblind, and of bringing about an insistence upon complete pedigrees of manuscripts thrown upon the market in this fashion.

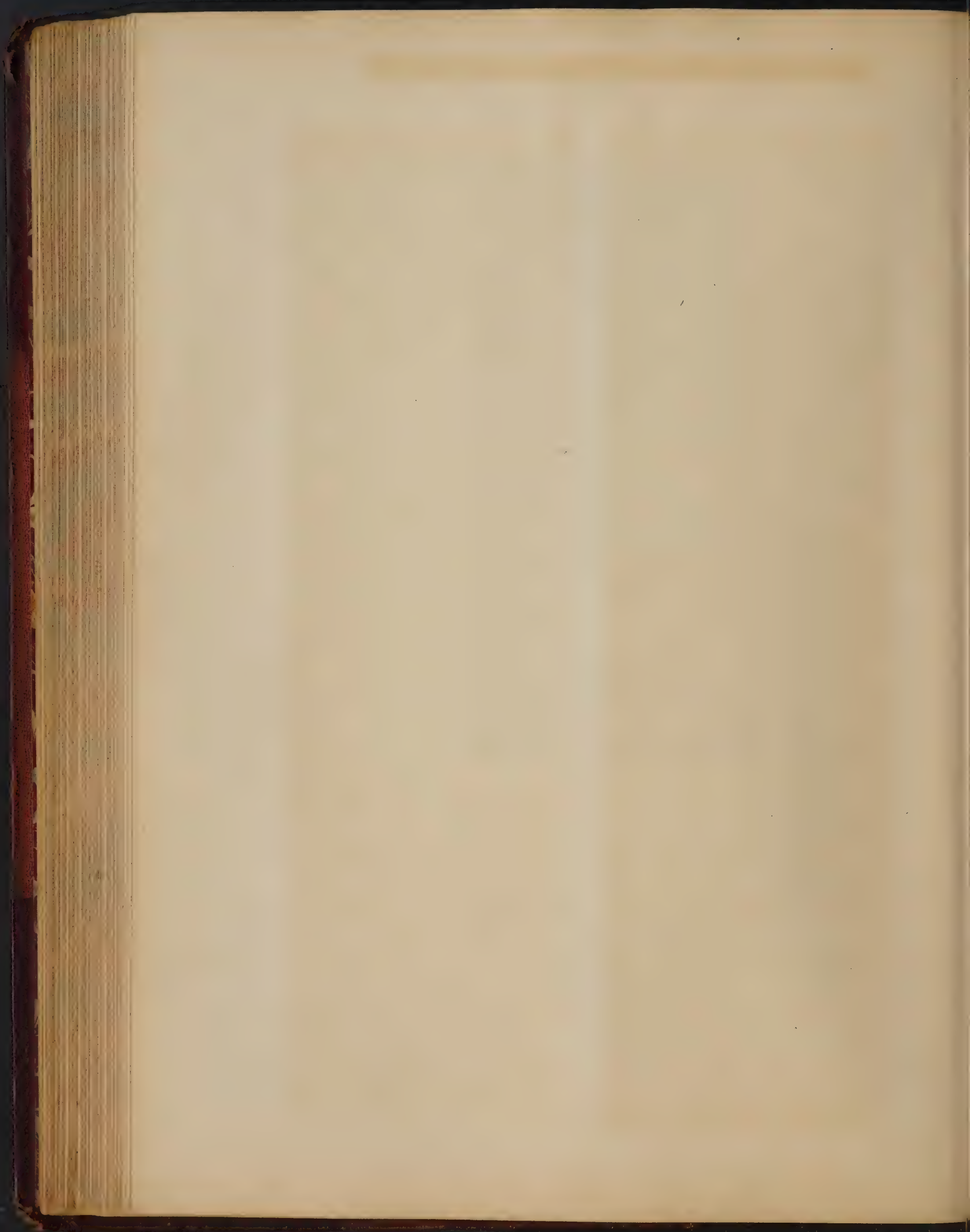




## Edinburgh Evening Dispatch

EDINBURGH, THURSDAY, December 1, 1892.

OUR lynx-eyed correspondent who unearthed the unpublished "Poor Man's Prayer" from the pages of the *London Magazine* to-day gives Mr Mackenzie, F.S.A. Scot., another nut to crack. When Mr Mackenzie staked his reputation on the genuineness of the "Poor Man's Prayer" he brought forward one of his other precious "originals," from which he quoted two verses purporting to be from "a poem written [by Burns] after hearing a sermon preached in Tarbolton Church." The poem is undoubtedly Roberts', as our correspondent points out, but not the Mackenzie Roberts' — otherwise Robert Burns' composition. The verses were addressed in the last century to a certain "Jacob Bryant, Esq.," by a Provost of Eton named Roberts, a Doctor of Divinity, though not connected with Tarbolton Church, and, curiously enough, the author of "The Poor Man's Prayer." What has Mr Mackenzie to say to this? Does he still hold to his written opinion that "after reading these lines it will be difficult to convince them [newspaper readers] that such are other than the genuine productions of our national poet?" It is quite evident his manuscripts — if the others are akin to the specimens he has made public — are worthless, and as fictitious as worthless. If the Society of Arts has a spare diploma at its disposal, now is its chance. In the matter of several arts, Mr Mackenzie's *fidus Achates*, "Antique" Smith, is fully qualified to give every satisfaction as a fellow who can easily beat the sophist at spinning his subtle thread.





# THE MSS. FRAUDS.

## A SECOND INNINGS.

### MR MACKENZIE STUMPED AGAIN.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

7 Warrender Park Crescent,

Edinburgh, November 30, 1892.

SIR,—The name "Roberts" annexed to "The Poor Man's Prayer" in the volume of selections referred to in Tuesday's *Dispatch*, has enabled me to lay my hand upon a certain work entitled "Poems by Dr Roberts, of Eton College, London, 1774." In the copy I have before me, on page 115 I find "The Poor Man's Prayer. Addressed to the Earl of Chatham. An Elegy. First published in 1766." But this is not the only curiosity in the volume. It may be recollected that Mr Mackenzie in the letter in which he guaranteed "The Poor Man's Prayer" to be an unpublished poem by Burns, gave the following specimens of another of his Burns manuscripts:—

The sophist spins his subtle thread  
On liberty and fate,  
With heart depraved and puzzled head  
Prolongs the dull debate:  
Till Virtue, Truth, his Saviour and his God,  
By Metaphysics mighty lore,  
At once lose all their essence, all their power,  
Charmed to eternal sleep by that Magician's rod

And concludes in the seventh verse:—

Proceed, my friend, so shalt thou find  
In these dark paths thy God;  
His works, His word, with steady mind,  
From stern oppression's rod,  
From quibbling words, from lying lips retrieve;  
And whilst thou talk'st of ancient days,  
Erect memorials to Jehovah's praise,  
Till sceptics cease to doubt and infidels believe.

These, Mr Mackenzie declared, were "two verses from a poem written after hearing a sermon preached in Tarbolton Free Church." Well, on page 155 of the volume I refer to I find a poem entitled "To Jacob Bryant, Esq.," which is as follows:—

I.  
The Sophist spins his subtle thread;  
On liberty and fate,  
With heart deprav'd, and puzzled head,  
Prolongs the dull debate:  
Till Virtue, Truth, his Saviour, and his God,  
By Metaphysic's mighty lore  
At once lose all their essence, all their power,  
Charmed to eternal sleep by that magician's rod.

II.  
O shame to prostituted parts!  
Was time, was genius given,  
To darken by dishonest arts  
The clear decrees of heaven?  
Tell me, my Bryant, burns not all thy soul  
With indignation's holy zeal?  
Tell me, thou Patriot of the Christian weal,  
Feel'st not, secure thyself, what dangers wait the *Whole*?  
III.  
Thou do'st. To vindicate the ways  
Of God to Man, is thine;  
And all thy nights, and all thy days  
In Truths neglected mine,  
By thee discover'd in these later times,  
Thine hand digs deep for solid ore,  
The hard-earn'd treasure speeds to many a shore,  
And claims its honour due, the praise of distant climes.

IV.  
Where'er thou com'st, discerning Sage,  
Detected Falshood flies:  
Tho' sanctified by many an age,  
The Creed of Centuries,  
Thy torch is rais'd, and lo! the historic Muse  
Rears from the dust her mangled head,  
Tells the true story of her mighty dead,  
And thro' each peopled land her wandering tribes pursues.

V.  
Now stronger grows the blaze of light;  
The darkness melts away  
Which wrapt Egyptian realms in night,  
And long obscur'd their day  
In vain from Ham's wife sons did Greece of old  
Aspire to tear invention's crown;  
In vain she hoped to fix a sure renown  
On tales of dragon's teeth, and fabled fleece of gold.

VI.  
The charm is o'er. Thou to her source  
Dark Error first didst trace;  
Thou marking all her winding course  
Shalt free the human race  
From prejudice, imbibed in earliest youth;  
And sweeping all the mists away  
Which Fiction rais'd to lead thy steps astray,  
Firm on her blazing throne shalt fix *Historic Truth*.

VII.  
Proceed, my friend; so shalt thou find  
In these dark paths thy God;  
His works, his word, with steady mind  
From stern oppression's rod,  
From quibbling words, from lying lips retrieve;  
And while thou talk'st of ancient days  
Erect memorials to Jehovah's praise,  
Till Sceptics cease to doubt, and Infidels believe,

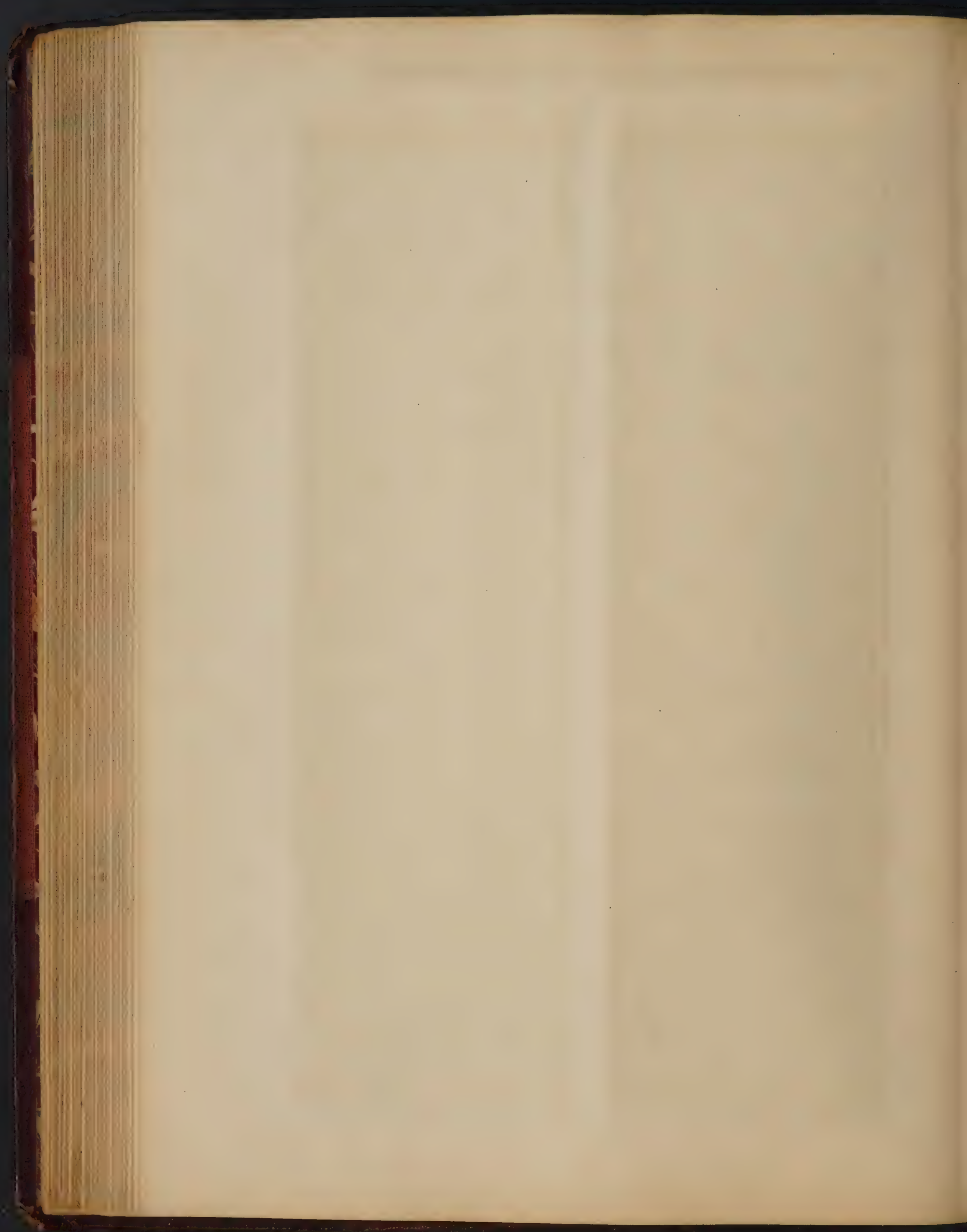
On looking into the matter I have ascertained that Dr Roberts, the author of the two poems, was a William Hayward Roberts, D.D., Provost of Eton in 1781, and afterwards chaplain to the King and rector of Farnham Royal, Bucks. He died in 1791. He was the author of another long poem entitled "Judah Restored," and of a work on the errors in the English version of the Old Testament. Miss Burney, in her Diary, describes the Provost as "very fat, with a large paunch, and gouty legs. He is good-humoured, loquacious, gay, civil, and parading. I am told, nevertheless, he is a poet, and a very good one. This, indeed, appears not, neither in a person such as I have described, nor in manners such as have drawn from me the character just given." A very good poet, truly, Miss Burney, when, a hundred years after his death, two of his poems should be mistaken for two by Robert Burns. At last he has achieved some measure of fame, but in a manner he little expected.—I am, &c. G. S.

## A PAWNBROKER'S STORY.

The circle of Smith's operations continues daily to extend. We have received the following account of the Smithsonian method, showing how he managed to "plant" a set of his MSS. on Mr Williamson, a pawnbroker in Frederick Street:—It appears that in the early part of August 1890 a little nervous individual called at Mr Williamson's shop, and offered some MSS. in pledge. Mr Williamson was out at the time, and the assistant explained that they did not do business in literary treasures. The little nervous man explained, however, that he was in need of a little ready cash, and that he would leave the MSS. till Mr Williamson had seen them. Mr Williamson examined the papers when he returned. He was not an expert in those matters, and he did not pretend to be, but the MSS. looked all right, and naturally he felt if he could get a guarantee of their genuineness there would be no harm in lending on them. There were several miscellaneous pieces in the collection, but what he was inclined to set most store by was a long letter by Sir Walter Scott which had all the appearance of being genuine. It was addressed from Paris to Scott's publisher, Mr Ballantyne, and purported to be a description of the execution of Marshall Ney, which took place in Paris in December 1815, that being the year in which Scott made his first Continental tour.

To set all doubts at rest, Mr Williamson, in the course of the day, submitted the manuscripts to Mr Stillie, bookseller, George Street. Mr Stillie at once pronounced the Scott letter to be genuine. He was perfectly familiar with Scott's handwriting, he explained, from his early connection with the great novelist in his youth, and he had no hesitation whatever in giving his opinion in favour of the letter. Next day the nervous little individual already referred to came back to Williamson's shop. This was Smith. He explained that he was a collector of manuscripts, that he was a trifle hard up, but that his salary would be falling due towards the end of the month, and that he would be able to redeem the documents. On the strength of these representations, and principally on account of the guarantee given by Mr Stillie, £2 were advanced upon the documents.

Evidently Smith thought the Frederick Street pawnbroker was a good subject to work upon, for next week he came back to him with more documents. The gem of this collection was a letter of Robert Burns. It pretended to be a copy in Burns' handwriting of a letter which has already been published among the Burns correspondence, and was addressed by the poet to Professor Dugald Stewart. Mr Williamson, it appears, was familiar with the face and the figure of Smith, but he knew nothing more about him than that he took his own word for it that he was a collector, and having once got Mr Stillie's voucher for the genuineness of Smith's collection, he had no hesitation upon this second occasion of advancing other £2 upon Smith's manuscripts. Of course it never crossed his mind that the documents were forgeries.





This was looking uncommonly well for Smith. His success inspired him with confidence. Before the month was out, this impecunious collector presented himself a third time at Mr Williamson's counter with a set of MSS., the gem this time being another letter of Scott. In all three sets, it will be observed, there was a document of importance along with a "when nicknacks" of less consequence, Jacobite proclamations and the like. These latter were the sort of ground-bait to attract the unwary pawnbroker to the prime documents. It was these three letters that fetched Mr Williamson; and, totally unsuspecting that he was being made the victim of a plant, and having faith in a collector whose "Scott" was guaranteed by Stillie the expert, he advanced a third sum of £2. In all, Smith succeeded in passing off upon him thirteen documents of various sorts, the two Scott's and the Burns letters being, of course, the MSS. on which the valuation was based, the rest, so to speak, being thrown in.

About a week after the last transaction Mr Williamson met Mr Maloney in the street. "I have some documents," said the former. "Were they brought to you by a man named Smith?" asked Maloney; to which Mr Williamson responded that they were; and the noted antiquarian, metaphorically speaking, "winked the other eye." This was the first suggestion that the documents might not be what they pretended to be. Mr Williamson felt his faith in Smith a little shaken, and it is doubtful if he would have consented to trade with Smith any further. But Smith did not give him the chance. Whether the close of the month relieved his necessities or not, we do not know, but he offered no more of his precious MSS. for sale, and he certainly never turned up to redeem his Scott's and his Burns and his Jacobite proclamations. The consequence was that, after lying the usual year on the shelf in Frederick Street, they were in due course, along with other unredeemed pledges, sent to the auction-room to be disposed of. The pawnbroker instructed the auctioneer not to guarantee the genuineness of the documents, and this, we understand, was done. But it shows the confiding nature of the amateur collector, and the market there is for such wares when it is stated that a purchaser was found for them at £7. 8s., so that it the ingenious and antique Smith benefited by his share in the transaction, the pawnbroker had no reason to feel despondent over his first experience as a dealer in literary wares, but we are led to believe that for the future he has fore sworn that particular line of business which he intends to leave to those who can pose as experts. As for the purchaser of the Smith MSS. at the auction sale, we have not heard his name, but we learn that he is rather proud of them, and has them framed in his back shop.

#### THE "ENCHANTED CABINET."

A reporter of the *Dispatch* called yesterday upon a well-known dealer in town, and had a conversation with him about MSS., and more particularly about the mysterious cabinet. The dealer in question is a gentleman who knows as much about old cabinets as perhaps any person in town, and he declared that the story about old manuscripts having been got by any one in a cabinet, after that cabinet had been through a dealer's hands, was a romance of the trade. No old cabinet ever came into the possession of a dealer but what it was ransacked from top to bottom for secret drawers and pigeon-holes of any kind; and it was a most improbable thing that a cabinet of the kind in question would have left a dealer's hands, and passed into those of Mr Mackenzie, leaving that gentleman to discover a secret drawer which, on being touched, revealed the fund of rare MSS. as narrated.

In regard to MSS., this dealer said that he had on more than one occasion been waited on by a person whom he now believed to be Antique Smith, asking him to purchase MSS. On the first occasion the man who was anxious to sell MSS. said he had not got them with him, but indicated that they belonged to a widow lady in reduced circumstances, who wished to part with them in order to realise a little money, which it was necessary for her to do for her subsistence. The man asked if the dealer would purchase them, but the dealer said it was no use saying whether he would purchase them or not till he saw them. The person in question did not return with the MSS., having evidently disposed of them some other way. But he came back shortly afterwards, and called the attention of the dealer to a

sale of MSS. which was about to take place in an auction room in Lothian Street. The dealer in question attended the sale and bid pretty highly, but he is glad now that some one else outbid him and he did not get them. Some of the stuff, however, afterwards came into his possession, and he is now convinced that it is all of a spurious character. Incidentally the dealer mentioned that he had seen in Dowell's Rooms, when they were spread out for public inspection, what has come to be known as the Ribbank Crescent collection of MSS.—that is to say, the collection which Mr Mackenzie exposed for sale at Dowell's a few years ago. When he saw them, it seemed to him that many of them were spurious; and on venturing to say so in the auction room, he was tackled by a person who evidently knew something about the collection, challenged for his statement, and told that he had better leave the room, as that was not a place for him.

#### "TAM O' SHANTER."

A correspondent states that while in "Bristol" Brown's shop he once saw a copy of "Tam O' Shanter," and our correspondent expressed the opinion that Burns never wrote it, and that the paper it was written on could not have been in existence when Burns lived. It would be interesting to know where this copy is now.

#### MR MACFIE'S EXPERIENCE.

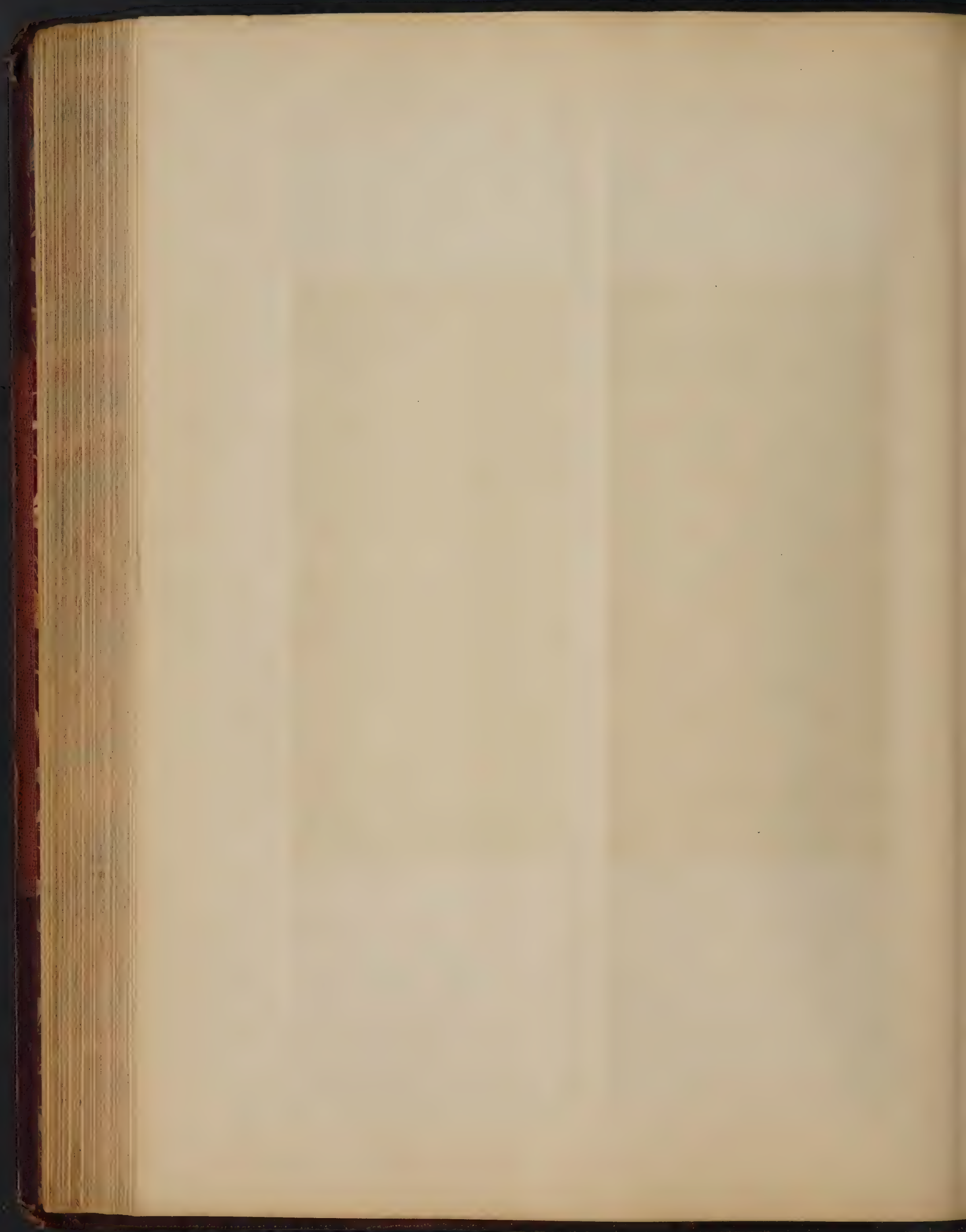
Mr Macfie of Dregghorn sends to us an account of his experience. A few years ago, he says, a well-known second-hand bookseller on the west side of Bristol Street, northern division, favoured him with one of his catalogues. Mr Macfie immediately called, and was shown, among other literary matter, autographs of Sir Walter Scott, with an honest remark that genuineness could not be guaranteed. Mr Macfie said he would like to take one of them home, and would cheerfully pay the small price demanded—three half-crowns or thereby—on the understanding that if he thought proper to return it, it would be taken back. He did not think it proper to do so, partly because there was so much genuineness in the article's appearance; partly because the possession of it served a good purpose in connection with a copy of "The Spy," he dares say; and partly because the very clever imitation (if imitation it was) gave so many interesting indications of what Edinburgh was in the first decade of the century, and of Scott as a man of business and citizen, in its two large post-paper closely-written pages, that to a certain extent genuineness did not impair its value if it was the copy of something genuine. At the same time, there were peculiarities that did not escape his notice. It had the look of having been washed or wetted; its brownness was very different from what Mr Macfie was accustomed to in writings of the period. The paper was of a somewhat unusual quality, so tough, and so even in surface, as to lend itself readily to the receiving of ink from a sheet lying on it and pressed down. The sealing was in very indifferent wax, and very carelessly executed—that is, the waxing was not done in a way Mr Macfie would have expected at the hands of a man in the great poet's position. There is an interesting notice on the back that the letter was sent by special messenger—a characteristic of the time. Mr Macfie also refers to other transactions; but this will suffice.

#### SOME CURIOUS NOTIONS.

Some correspondents have curious notions about the objects of the present inquiry. One gentleman, writing to us from Middlesbrough, says:—

I beg to state that I have a genuine letter (*sic*) written by the late Lord Tennyson, Poet Laureate, on August 11th, 1892; and hearing that there is a great demand for letters of the late Lord Tennyson, I thought I would take the liberty of inquiring of you about the best means of disposing of that same, and shall feel obliged if you could help me in this matter.

Several others have sent copies of manuscripts in the autograph of living celebrities, asking their value, and how they could best be proved. Obviously, we should say, by sending them to the living celebrities who wrote them, and whose estimate of their value would be interesting. Other three correspondents have either written or called to say that they believed they knew the "mysterious Smith." In one case he was represented as an old gentleman who wrote sermons and poems. Each of them indeed was old, and they had no identity with "Antique" Smith save the surname. Another gentleman writes that he has got a copy of the "autograph" of "Julius Cæsar," evidently in the





best style of "Antique Smith;" and this joker suggests that some old lady in Fife may possibly have a spare copy of the Mosaic "tables of stone" executed in the neighbourhood of Leith Walk, and warranted genuine.

#### A COVERT ALLUSION.

Lord Rosebery, in his speech to the Scottish Corporation last night, evidently had our recent revelations in his mind when he cynically mentioned among the "attractions" of Edinburgh the "Alexandrian library of Burns' MSS. and of Walter Scott's autographs."

#### WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

Edinburgh, November 30, 1892.

SIR,—In reply to your correspondent "Justitia" permit me to suggest that instead of a bonfire we might have volunteered a committee of honourable experts (such as Drs Anderson and Dickson) with powers to examine and endorse all MSS. sent for their inspection, and to mark all spurious documents unmistakably. I would also add the recommendation that specimens of these forgeries should be collected and preserved for reference in one of our public archives.

Unlike any previous attempts of the kind these forgeries range over a wide field (16th to 19th centuries), and are in such wholesale quantity that many are already placed beyond our recall. Our anxiety is, therefore, for the time when this "exposure" will have become a thing of the past. These frauds will come out from their isolated hiding-places, and have then attached to them a history more or less real. Time, too, will have lent his hand in defacing those features which to us of to-day are so unmistakable. It will be the ever-present witness in the public archives which will keep alive suspicion, and prove a means of preserving our national relics from the brand of this evil genius.—I am, &c. E. S.

#### THE VALUE OF AUTOGRAPHS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

SIR,—As a young collector of the genus Novice you might print as a guide the proper market value of genuine letters and autographs of literary celebrities—say, Burns, Scott, Tennyson, Thackeray, Dickens, Longfellow, Oliver W. Holmes, Browning, Gladstone, Rosebery, Ruskin, Hogg, and a host of others. This would put such as I on our guard.—I am, &c. TAKEN IN.

[The following prices were realised at the important sale of autographs belonging to Mr Arthur Preston, of Norwich, by Messrs Sotheby, Wilkinson, & Hodge, London, in August 1888, the sale lasting four days. It

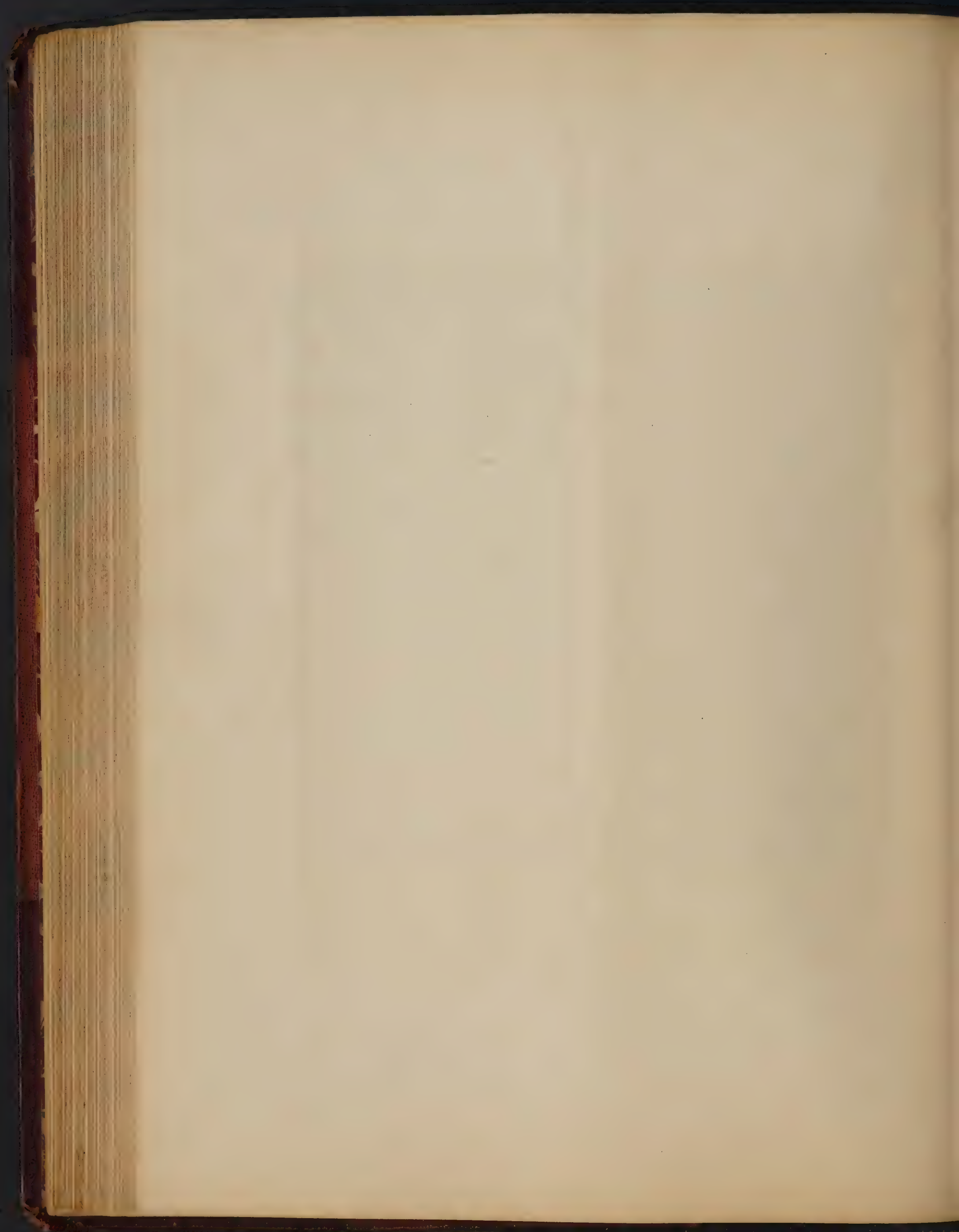
may safely be assumed that genuine autographs of the same kind have not fallen in value since that date :— Autograph poem by Robert Burns, written in Carse Hermitage, 3 pp. folio, £18, 15s.; David Hume, historian, autograph letter of introduction, £3, 5s.; Sir Walter Scott, autograph letter to Hayley, £1, 3s.; Sir Walter Scott, four-page letter to the Marchioness of Abercorn, £3, 14s.; W. M. Thackeray, autograph letter, £1, 2s.; James Hogg, "the Ettrick Shepherd," autograph letter to Lord Buchan, 1818, 10s.]

#### THE JUSTICES AND THE COUNTY BUILDINGS ALTERATIONS.

THE committee of the Justices of the Peace of the County of Edinburgh met yesterday in the County Rooms to consider the question of the future accommodation of the Justices within the County Buildings. The Chairman (Mr Alexander Hope, Pinkie House) said that the Justices of the Peace of the County of Mid-Lothian having learned that by a contemplated alteration of the County Buildings it was intended, according to a plan which the County Council had obtained, to occupy a portion of the reconstructed building as a police barrack, and to exclude the Justices from their hitherto undisputed use of the buildings, thought it necessary to take some steps to assert their privileges and preserve their rights. They had been advised by counsel that as Justices of the Peace they had a vested right to accommodation in the buildings. They had also procured a plan from an architect, by whom it had been satisfactorily shown that ample accommodation could be provided for both the County Council and the Justices of the Peace, and that at a less cost than the amount required by the plan for carrying out the reconstruction which had been before the County Council. The committee observed that notice had been given for the promotion in Parliament of a bill to enable the County Council to borrow money, and to exercise various powers of a somewhat indefinite character. The committee were afraid that it might be intended by this bill to give power to the County Council, by statutory authority, to deprive the Justices of their rights and privileges, and to relieve the County Council from the obligation of building over the ground occupied by Liberton's Wynd.

Sir John Don Wauchop moved that the Clerk of the Peace communicate with the Clerk of the County Council intimating a request for a conference, in the hope that a satisfactory arrangement would be arrived at.

Mr John Cowan of Bealack seconded the motion, which was adopted.





# LITERARY FORGERIES IN EDINBURGH.

(FROM OUR EDINBURGH CORRESPONDENT.)

Something of the nature of a sensation has been caused by the discovery of a wholesale manufacture of autographs and literary and historical documents in Edinburgh. A suspicion of fraud has been in the air for two or three years, in consequence of the number and variety of "invaluable relics" put in circulation by antiquarian booksellers and collectors, and also of the remarkably low prices which most of these documents realized at sales. No one, as a rule, is more easily imposed on than the eager collector of autographs and original manuscripts, but when he is offered for the price of an old song specimens which would be priceless if genuine, even his suspicions are aroused. The operators, in the case of the Edinburgh forgeries—for such they must be called—seemed to have presumed too freely on the gullibility of their dupes, and they are reaping the reward, not of those who do wrong but of those who commit the greater sin of being found out. The credit of pricking the bubble is due to the pertinacity of the *Evening Dispatch*, which issues from the office of the *Scotsman*. Its exposures have the merit of vigour and thoroughness, though they are not always characterized by the purest literary taste. It has been the means of proving undoubted forgery in a very conspicuous instance. In May, 1891, an Edinburgh collector had a public sale of his treasures, the most remarkable feature of which was the very low prices which they brought. In August last, this same collector was rash enough to send to an Ayrshire paper copies of two autograph poems of Robert Burns, the originals of which he declared to have been in his possession for 25 years, and which had never been printed. One of these poems was entitled the "Poor Man's Prayer," and in the course of it Chatham was appealed to. The collector expressed the opinion that no one could read the verses without being convinced that they were the production of the national bard. I quote three of the verses in order that the ordinary reader, to say nothing of the literary critic, may be able to judge of the kind of stuff that is described as worthy of Robert Burns:—

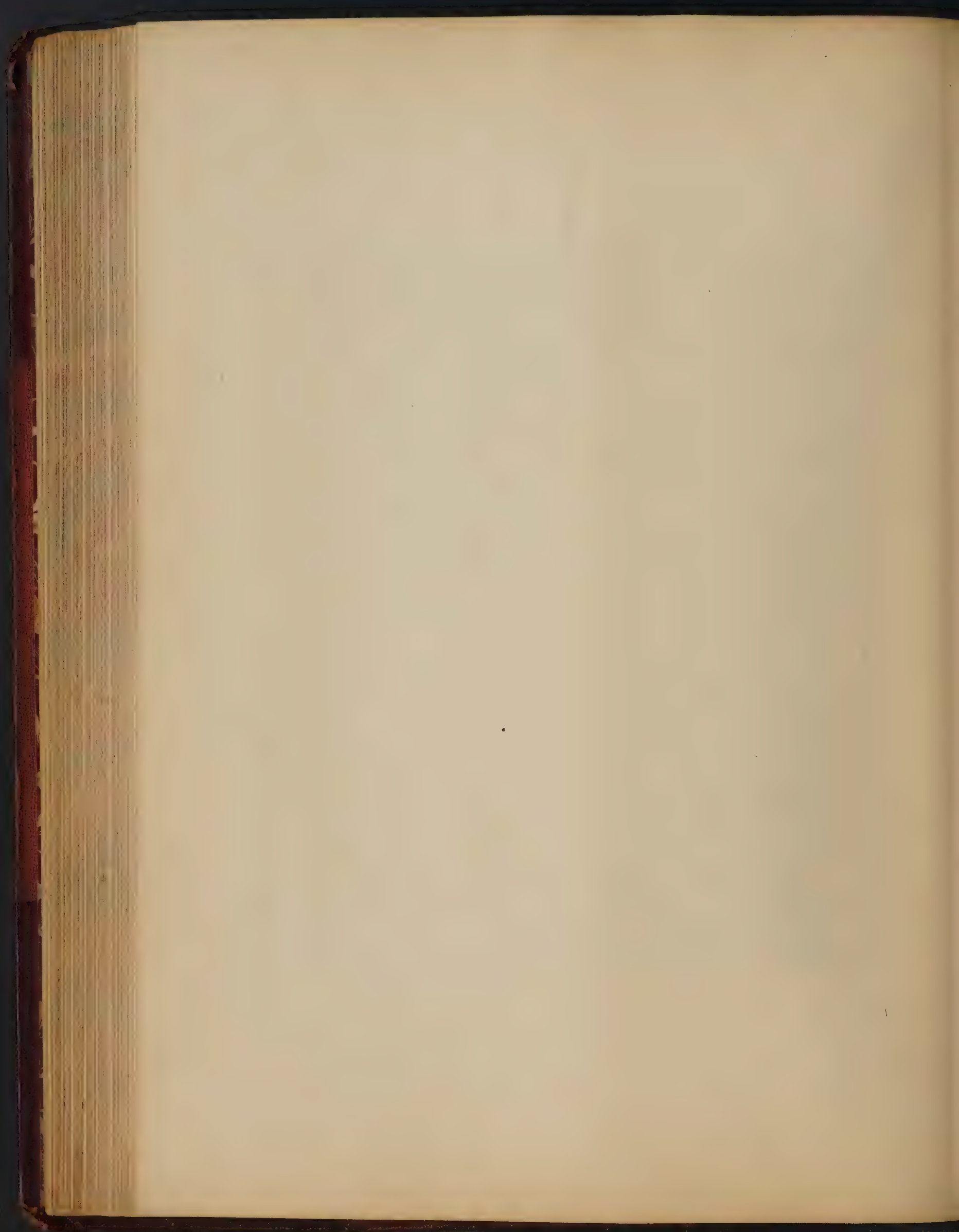
## THE POOR MAN'S PRAYER.

Amidst the more important toils of state,  
The counsels labouring in thy patriot soil;  
Though Europe from thy voice expect her fate,  
And thy keen glance extend from pole to pole,

O Chatham, nursed in ancient virtue's lore,  
To these sad strains incline a favouring ear,  
Think on the God whom thou and I adore,  
Nor turn unpitying from the poor man's prayer.

While I, contented with my homely cheer,  
Saw round my knees our prattling children play,  
And oft with pleased attention sat to hear,  
The little history of their idle day.

But this is not merely a question of judgment; it is a question of fact. For Mr. George Stronach, one of the librarians of the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, has found, not only these verses, but a great many more of the same stamp, printed in the *London Magazine* for 1766. The verses are there described as "Extracts from 'The Poor Man's Prayer,' addressed to the Earl of Chatham; by Simon Hedge, labourer." It might, of course, be argued that "Simon Hedge" was a *nom de plume* of Robert Burns; but, unfortunately for this supposition, Burns was in 1766 a boy of seven years, and the notion of his "prattling children" playing round his knees at that age is too absurd to need refutation. This discovery has given the *coup de grâce* to the whole scheme of forgeries. With this failure all the other impostures of the same set necessarily assume the same character. The unfortunate circumstance is that several antiquarian booksellers of the highest repute seem to have been involved (unconsciously it must be presumed) in the dissemination of the spurious documents. It is still more unfortunate for legitimate trade in autographs and original manuscripts that some of these booksellers seem to be inclined to shield the culprits in this most nefarious transaction. Many of the documents, the genuineness of which is involved in the inquiry, are of great historical import, and of great value. They include a parchment copy of "the Solemn League and Covenant"—of untold value if genuine; a copy of the "Earl of Mar's proclamation" of 1715; letters of Burns, Scott, and Thackeray; and autographs of Burke, Cromwell, Carlyle, Hume, Mary Queen of Scots, Nelson, and Pitt. There is some reason to suspect that a collection of manuscript poems of Burns, including an autograph copy of "Scots wha hae," which was presented to the city of Edinburgh by Mr. Kennedy, a New York banker, in September, 1890, includes some, at least, of the spurious material. The case is thus one of general, indeed of national, importance, and it may be hoped that it will be thoroughly investigated. The collector above referred to was asked by several correspondents to submit his manuscripts to the authorities either of the British Museum or of the Advocates' Library, but he uniformly and decidedly refused to do so.





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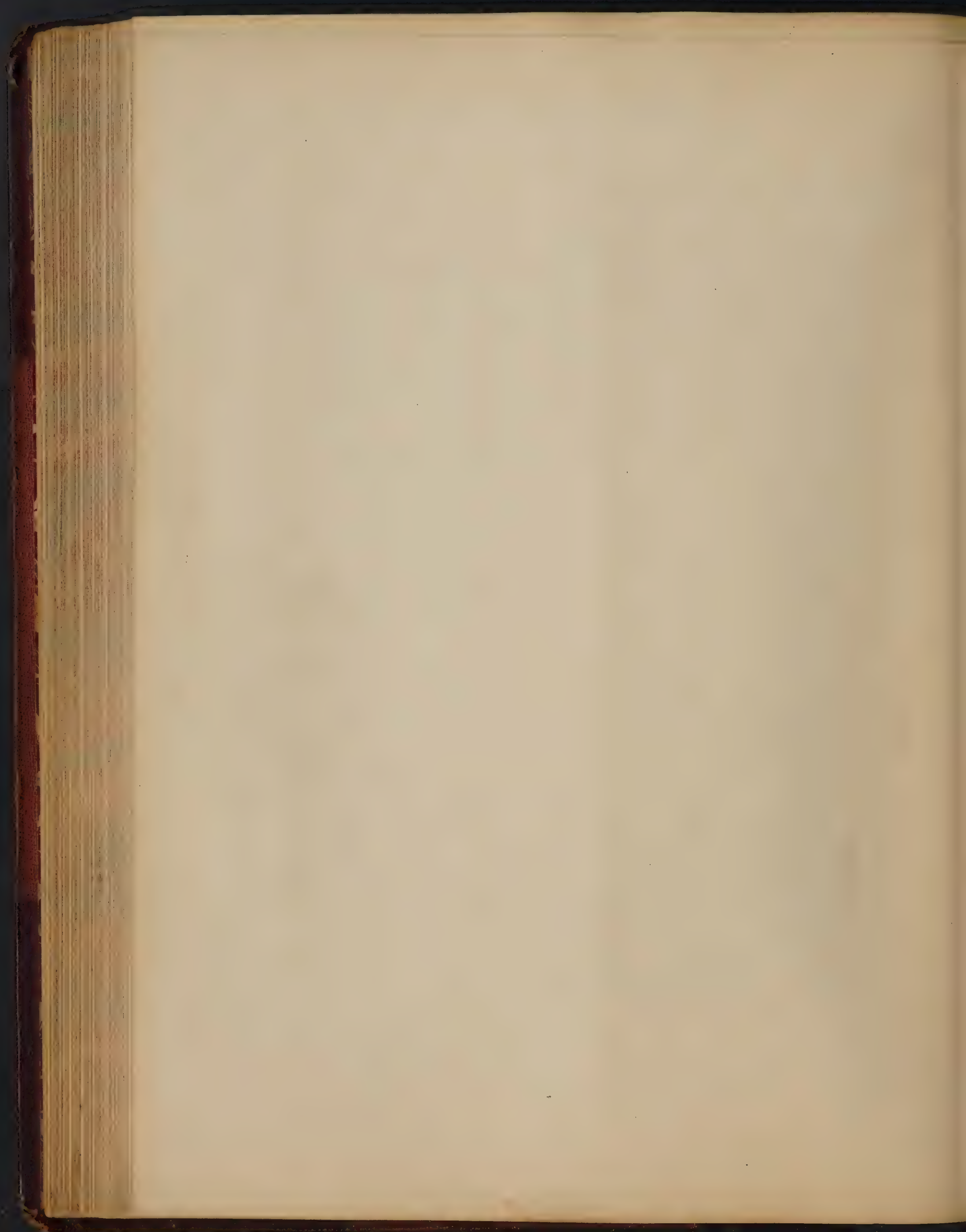
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# THE SCOTTISH CORPORATION.

The 228th annual festival of this corporation was celebrated yesterday, St. Andrew's Day, by a banquet at the Freemason's Tavern, Great Queen-street.

The chief work carried on by the corporation in London is the Scottish Hospital, the foundation of which dates back to the reign of Charles II., and of which the Prince of Wales is president. The hospital assist at their own homes the deserving Scottish poor of London, who are not in receipt of parochial relief. The income is derived principally from voluntary contributions. Nearly 200 pensions are given upon certain conditions to natives of Scotland who have resided 12 years in London, 161 of £12 a year and the remainder from £6 to £30. In addition to this monthly relief is granted to other natives of Scotland upon whom misfortune and poverty have fallen. To widowed natives of Scotland, and to widows of Scotsmen, who have left their families unprovided for, an allowance is paid in respect of each child until it reaches the age of 12. Under this head considerably over £2,000 is spent annually. Relief is also given to any native of Scotland who from want of work or other causes is temporarily in a destitute condition. Over 2,000 have been annually relieved in this way. The hospital also distributes the pensions of the Kinloch bequest, about £1,200 per annum, to Scotch soldiers and sailors who have been wounded or have lost their eyesight in the service of their country.

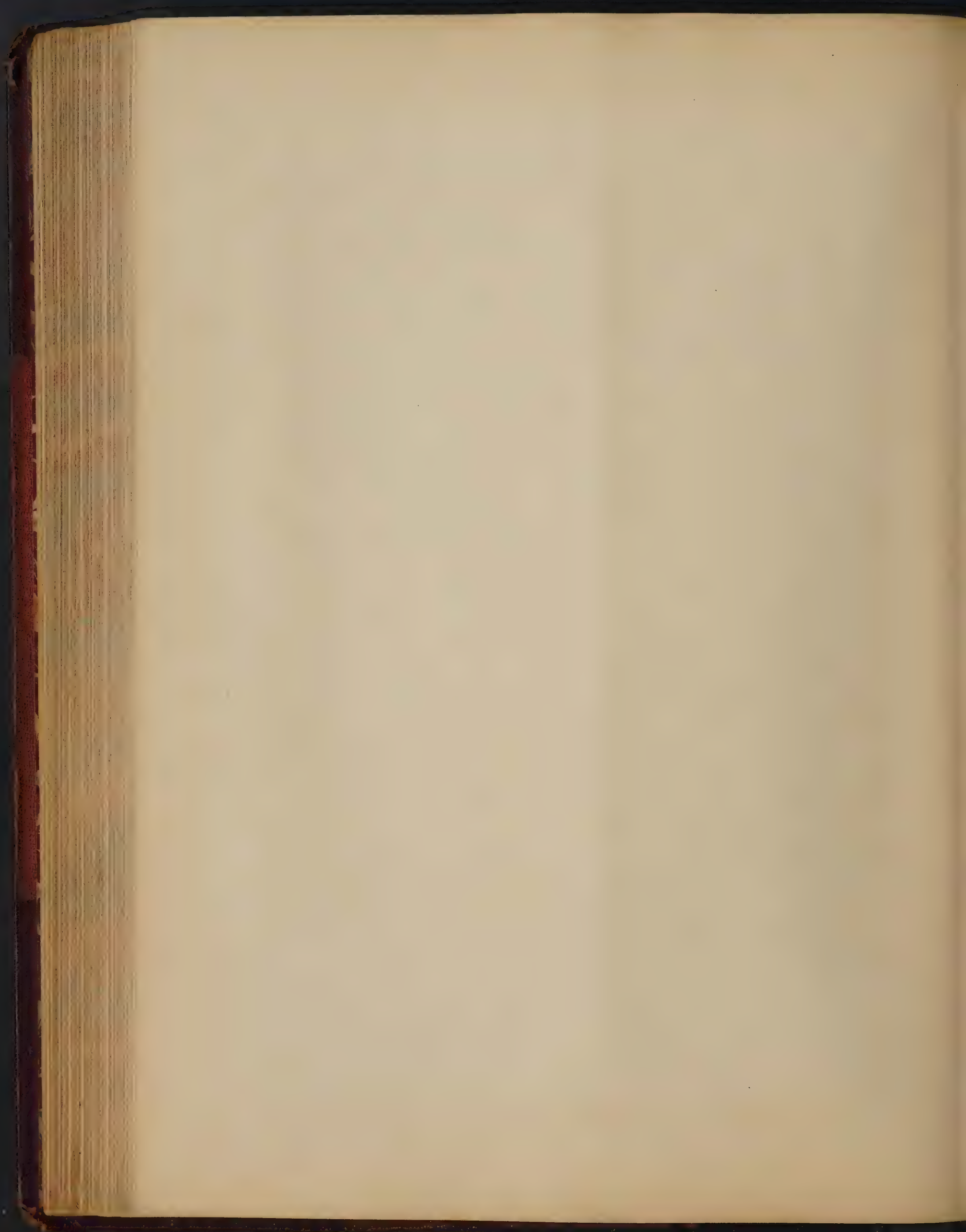
At the banquet the Earl of Rosebery presided, and among those present were the Danish Minister, the Chilean Minister, Count de Lalaing, Sir W. Mac-kinnon, Sir M. R. Shaw-Stewart, Sir J. Rigby (Solicitor-General), Sir J. Pender, M.P., Sir C. Tennant, Sir C. Dalrymple, M.P., Sir G. Findlay, Major-General Shaw-Stewart, Archdeacon Sinclair, Lieutenant-Colonel Hozier, Mr. W. Dunn, M.P., Rev. Dr. Macleod, Mr. Shiress Will, M.P., Dr. Donald Macgregor, Mr. H. S. Forster, M.P., Mr. H. W. Paul, M.P., Professor Dewar, General Rogers, V.C., and Mr. J. M. Barrie.

After the health of "The Queen and the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the rest of the Royal Family" had been duly honoured,

The EARL OF ROSEBERY then proposed the toast of the evening, "The Scottish Corporation." He was received with enthusiastic cheers, and said,—You are well aware that our favoured nation is regarded with feelings of disinterested envy by every other nation. I say it, I trust, with becoming modesty and also with a proper consciousness that it is the truth. (Laughter.) Now the nation among whom we are privileged to live and to meet this evening have their St. George's Day. But what is St. George's Day? Who celebrates St. George's Day? (Laughter.) St. George, I believe, was an army contractor (laughter); and I think that, without saying anything personal to anybody present, when I have so described St. George I have dismissed him. (Laughter.) The Welsh have their St. David's Day. I wish well to the Welsh and to St. David, but I do not hear of any sumptuous or alarming entertainments on behalf of St. David's Day. The Irish, perhaps, approach more nearly to our anniversary with their St. Patrick's Day. (Hear, hear.) I hear a faint cheer; but, owing to circumstances which it is not necessary this evening to particularize, the festival of St. Patrick is not honoured with that national unanimity which is pre-eminently the characteristic of our present entertainment. (Cheers.) After all, gentlemen, even if they dine, how do they dine, these Englishmen, these Welshmen, and these Irishmen? They have no national dish; they have no national music. I do not suppose you would call Irish stew a national dish (laughter); while we, serene and complacent, sit in front of our haggis, with our whisky by our side, and surrounded by our bagpipes, in the full enjoyment of national pleasure. (Cheers.) There is, however, one disappointing feature on this occasion and that is the chairman. ("No, no.") I expected that, but I have my own view. I am well aware that my presence in the chair to-night is not due to any merit of my own, but rather to the fact that after the committee had in vain asked every distinguished man among them to undertake the duty, they fell back upon their treasurer. ("No, no.") They said, "It is the

business of the treasurer to fill the treasure-house of the corporation," and therefore if no one else is found to perform the duty it must fall upon him. In consequence, this will be the third time that I have filled this position, and I feel as if I had been dragged out, like some stale old post-horse which has done two courses already, and which is called on to perform a third at the bidding of some imperious traveller. (Laughter, and "No, no.") I remember well the first occasion that I presided here. It was in my early youth, and I was reminded of it by the delightful song to which we have just listened, "Caller Herrin." I then ventured to remark, with the natural imprudence and unvaracity of youth, that the only productions of Scotland known to the Southerner were "herrings" and Liberal members of Parliament. (Laughter.) Alas! gentlemen, times are sadly changed indeed. There are now fewer of both. (Laughter.) Herrings have diminished and so have Liberal members of Parliament. (Laughter.) I cannot help thinking that there is some affinity between those two orders of creation. It is not that they disappear, but they sometimes shoal in one place and sometimes in another. A friend of mine on the left will tell you that you will find herrings sometimes in Loch Fyne and sometimes in Loch Gail; so with Liberal members of Parliament, sometimes we may easily find them in Scotland, but at the present time, I think, we are more apt to find them in Wales. (Laughter.) But after all there are many other products in Scotland besides herrings and members of Parliament. There is marmalade (laughter); there are provosts, there are crofters, there are bailies—of whom you hear little in London—and there are metaphysics. (Laughter.) There is besides a peculiar form of undergraduate, who appears at Oxford in advanced middle age with several Caledonian degrees ripening upon him. He leaves it with all the prizes of Oxford upon him, spruce and young, possibly to seek new degrees elsewhere; but I am inclined to think that he usually becomes a Judge the moment he arrives in London. (Cheers and laughter.) Of course, gentlemen, if I was making an exhaustive speech on Scotland to-night—and as Scotland is not yet a foreign country I have had little dealings with her of late, and therefore I am imperfectly acquainted with her (laughter)—I could then dilate at great length on the peculiarities and products of my native country; but at present my purpose is a serious one. I have come here to extract from the pockets of my fellow-countrymen placks and, it may be, bawbees. (Laughter.) Now, I desire to discuss that subject in a scientific spirit, and I ask you to consider with me an analogy which is proper to the occasion. You have doubtless often read ill-natured animadversions on the tendency of the Scottish nation to proceed southwards and not to return. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) At one time that belief, it is said, was so inculcated by the directors of railroads and other persons that on one of the main lines from Edinburgh it was stated that return tickets were only issued northwards. (Laughter.) Well, that process is now in the main reversed. The contentment of the English with their southern kingdom has ceased to be the fact, and there is a great movement northwards. (Cheers.) I can only compare it as an analogy to the Nile. You are all aware that in the Egyptian summer every inhabitant almost of Egypt watches the rise and progress of the Nile with the most feverish anxiety, because on that rise and on that overflow depends the livelihood of every peasant in Egypt. So we in Scotland, from the laird down to the gillie, anticipate with the most lively excitement the stream which pours northwards in the month of August. It is heralded by the blooming appearance of the High Commissioner in Edinburgh. True, he is not a Southerner; as a rule he is a Scotchman; he is a hardy annual, perhaps not so hardy just now as he was. (Laughter.) Still, he is a hardy annual, and when he makes his appearance in the streets of Edinburgh for the purpose of inaugurating the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland we all in Caledonia prick up our ears and expect that beneficent flood of which I have spoken. (Hear, hear.) In another moment, it appears, we see a double flood—the Anglo-American flood setting northwards, and this flood has two affluents, one coming from New York and one from London. About the beginning of August it settles in the Lowlands. There is Abbotsford, Melrose, Dryburgh; there is, I know, the Forth-bridge; there is Princes'-street, Edinburgh, and there are the cairngorms of Princes'-street. There are, too, a library of Burns manuscripts and of Walter Scott autographs. (Cheers.) Later on there comes a more direct flow northwards—the Anglo-Saxon flow straight from London to the moors. That passes over the Forth-bridge, and for







that particular form of beneficence are reserved the moors that have no grouse and the forests that have no deer. (Laughter.) But, after all, man does not live by grouse or deer alone, and even the disappointed moor tenants return south after a month or so with the consciousness that they have done a good action and have enriched a considerable number of the people of Scotland. (Cheers and laughter.) But I say in a scientific spirit that I want to trace that stream to its source as our great discoverers have followed up the Nile until they have traced it to various nyanzas. So we are able to follow up the stream and trace it, one source from New York and the other from London. The one in New York I cannot tap; but the one in London I am endeavouring to tap to-night. (Cheers.) Why should that golden stream run dry in the middle of September? Why should we not be able to claim for Scotchmen in London, which does so much in August for Scotland, something of their beneficence? I think we have a right to ask this of them; and I do not think they will deny us that right. I think they will remember that this Scotch nation of ours asks little and does much. (Cheers.) We as a rule succeed in the race of life, but some of us fail, and for two centuries and a quarter in this vast ocean of London there has been a little island of refuge for Scotchmen who thus fail in this Scottish Corporation. If it was started in times, as regards beneficence and sympathy, so barren and bleak as those of Charles II., I do not think we are likely to let it suffer or fail in the reign of Queen Victoria (cheers); and I appeal to you at a time of special stress in this corporation not to allow this evening to pass without a signal proof that, whereas you can enjoy Scotland in your pleasure, you can also sympathize with her in her pain. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. DUNN, M.P., proposed the "Army, Navy, and Reserve Forces."

MAJOR-GENERAL SHAW-STEWART, R.E., in the course of his reply, said he had heard a rumour he could scarcely credit—that one of the most distinguished Highland regiments, the old 79th, or Cameronian Highlanders, was to be wiped out of existence and amalgamated with the Scots Guards. He supposed it was intended as a compliment to their countrymen, and that the authorities were in doubt as to whether the peace of London would be maintained without the aid of stalwart Highlanders. But he believed that when the Secretary for War, who was himself a distinguished Scotsman, learnt of the dissatisfaction such an arrangement would produce among his countrymen, he would withdraw the order. He wished, on the part of the Army and Navy, to express their thanks to that great corporation for the manner in which the Kinloch bequest had been administered. He would like, however, to see in the list of the committee who administered that fund the names of some soldiers and sailors which were at present conspicuous by their absence.

COLONEL HOZIER responded for the Reserve Forces.

The SOLICITOR-GENERAL (Sir J. Rigby, Q.C., M.P.), responding for the Houses of Parliament, said that as to the Upper House his experience would not allow him to do more than to gratefully acknowledge the honour done to it. They knew well that their noble chairman prided himself on his position in that House and how satisfied he was with its present constitution (laughter), and he could not do better than to say that he held the same sentiments on the subject. (Laughter.) With regard to the House of Commons he could only say that he felt sure they had not yet forgotten the struggles and trials attending the general election, and he thought they would feel some sort of sympathy

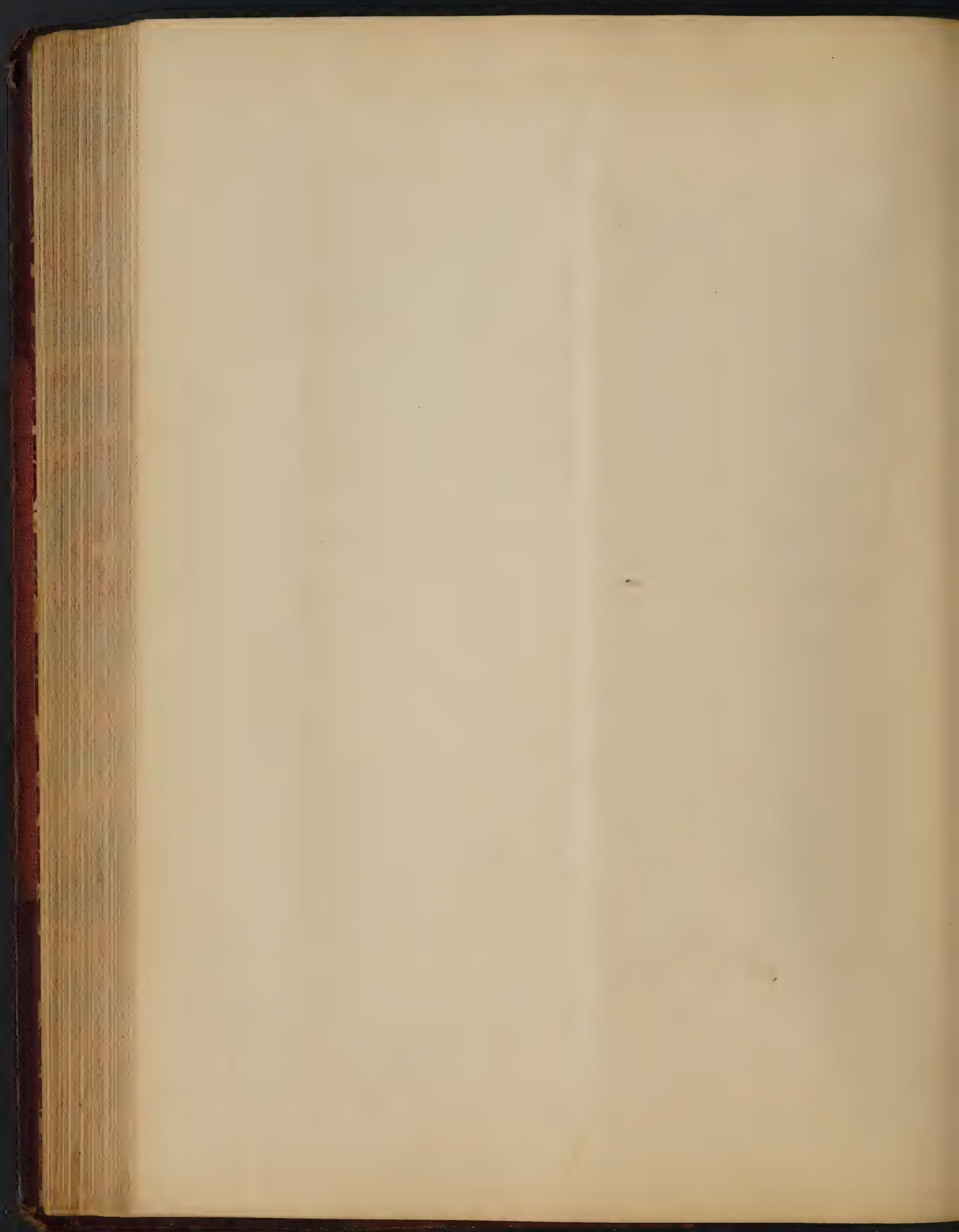
with the toil and trouble that now attended the election of members of Parliament. They would probably see, from the accounts in the papers, how difficult it was to retain seats which had been so hardly won. They would also appreciate the troubles before the House of Commons. (Laughter.) When, at the end of January, the members met they would have an arduous task before them, but not too arduous for the patriotism of the representatives of Great Britain and Ireland. (Cheers.)

SIR M. SHAW-STEWART then proposed the health of "The Guests," which was responded to by the Danish Minister and Mr. JOHN BLAIR.

SIR CHARLES TENNANT next proposed the health of "The Chairman," which was enthusiastically received, the company rising and singing in various keys "For he's a jolly good fellow."

The EARL of ROSEBURY, in reply, said:—I am very grateful to you for drinking my health, and to Sir Charles Tennant for the far too eloquent terms in which he has proposed it. I hope that my health is better than the chorus, because that seemed to be wanting somewhat in collectiveness, though I trust not in unanimity of sentiment and concert of purpose. (Laughter.) That leads me to the fact that some uneasiness has been expressed about the health collectively of those gentlemen with whom I am associated in the Government. It has interested me very much to hear it said that, because all of us were not able to dine out on a certain occasion, it was believed that we were not as well as all our enemies could wish. (Laughter.) There were only four of us who refused the invitation, and therefore 13 out of the 17 members of the Cabinet were present. Let us take the four who were absent. I had an engagement to dine elsewhere, the Prime Minister had a medical certificate. I have not seen the reasons given for the absence of the two others, but they are no doubt perfectly obvious. (Laughter.) When 13 out of 17 accepted the invitation to dinner, it is quite obvious that the other four felt a delicacy in obtruding themselves on the company, on an occasion when there would have been a superfluity of people of the same political opinions. (Laughter.) When the Lord Mayor's dinner comes only once a year, why should the whole 17 of us flock as if we were famished to share in the turtle? (Laughter.) Thirteen of us went; why should you grudge the other four the self-satisfaction of not being able to be present where they had sent so many representatives? I am not only troubled a good deal by the aspersions cast in the papers on the health of my colleagues, but also by those cast upon my own; and they result in an increase in my correspondence. The efforts people make to cure a complaint from which I am glad to say that I have been for many months past entirely free have greatly touched me. People from all parts of the world have written to me, honestly and sympathetically, to tell me what has done them good, and though, fortunately, I am beyond the requirement of those remedies, yet the kindness, the unbounded kindness, they have shown to a person they know little about will always remain in my mind. (Cheers.)

In the course of the evening the secretary, Mr. Buchan, announced that the subscriptions amounted to £2,494, including an annual subscription of £100 from the Queen, £100 from the chairman, £100 from Sir W. Mackinnon, £50 from Sir M. Shaw-Stewart, and £20 from Mr. W. Dunn, M.P.





## THE MSS. FRAUDS.

### NOTE FROM MR STILLIE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH.]"

SIR,—From being afflicted with a serious attack of diabetes, the attention which it requires, old age (88), and the weather, I have been unable to read your articles in the *Dispatch*, but [they] have been communicated to me. I trust to your kind sympathy a little, when I hope to be able to meet these assertions.

J.A. STILLIE.

19 George Street, 1st December 1892.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH.]"

Edinburgh, December 1, 1892.

SIR,—While thanking you for your great efforts to trace the history of the recent forgeries of the Burns and other MSS., and bring the guilty parties to the bar of public opinion, allow me to say a word for old Mr Stillie, now near his four score and ten. The editor of the *Cummock Express*, in his letter to you of yesterday, says:—

"Can it be that not only John Hill but a Mr Haig, of Kilmarnock, also, to whom Burns is said to have sent one of his poems, are only myths? Mr Stillie asked me to find out, if possible, some trace of this Mr Haig; but though I made the most careful inquiries in many of the most likely quarters, I was utterly unsuccessful in both cases."

You will find in the "Annotations" published by you on the Burns MSS. of "John Anderson, My Jo" and "The Gowan," which were bought by Mr Kennedy, of New York, from Mr Stillie, of George Street, two years ago, that the name of a "Mr Haig" appears.

It is evident from the letter of the *Cummock Express* that Mr Stillie did not suspect these were forgeries, otherwise he would not have courted inquiry, and sought to trace the history of the said "Mr Haig," but would rather have "let sleeping dogs lie," well knowing the truth of the old adage, "Give a dog a bad name, and you may as well hang it."

Let our Town Council have their MS. copy of "Scots Wha Hae," which Mr Kennedy, of New York, purchased for £70 from Mr Quaritch, of London, and presented to them, sent to the British Museum for examination and report.—I am, &c. FAIRPLAY.

[We may refer to these two letters together. There will be general and deep sympathy with Mr Stillie, whose age and his long and honourable record and strict integrity entitle him to every consideration. Our other correspondent appears to labour under a singular misconception regarding our position. We have never even hinted a suggestion that Mr Stillie entertained any doubt regarding his manuscripts. On the contrary, we knew that he believed in them thoroughly—only too thoroughly. His mistake, as we think, lay in being over-confident, and though he may not have spoken very charitably of those who questioned his judgment, they never retaliated in the same spirit. The public will look forward with curiosity to hear Mr Stillie's explanation.]

### JACOBITE "RELICS" AT THE NAVAL AND MILITARY EXHIBITION.

On turning over the pages of the Catalogue of the Naval and Military Exhibition held lately in Edinburgh, and particularly on glancing over that section of it entitled "Autograph Dispatches, Commissions, Letters, and other Documents of Naval and Military Interest," two very prominent features will strike the eye. One is the heading, "From the Mackenzie Collection;" and the other, "From the Bryce Collection." Turning, again, to the Index, it will be found that the "Mackenzie Collection" contained 29 exhibits, and the "Bryce Collection" 39. The owner of the former is described as "Mackenzie, J., 2 Rillbank Crescent, Edinburgh;" and of the latter "Bryce, Captain Moir, Edinburgh." In both cases the docu-

ments professed to be of Jacobite origin. Of course, not having an opportunity of inspecting any of these documents in the light of recent disclosures, it would be unjust for us to hint a doubt of their genuineness, save to say that those exhibited by Mr Mackenzie necessarily lie under the very strongest suspicion. It would be interesting, however, to know whether Captain Moir Bryce procured any his collection from the same inexhaustible store which has replenished so many other collections, and even founded new ones. Mr Bryce in this matter has the opportunity of doing a great public service—an opportunity which has been foolishly rejected by Mr Mackenzie; and seeing that Mr Bryce exhibited his Collection in all good faith to the people of Scotland as a genuine one, there is an obligation resting upon him, if he now entertains any suspicions, to let in the light upon the origin of the relics so far as he knows it. If Mr Bryce has been a victim too, he has the consolation of knowing that he has been victimised in distinguished company, even the company of peers; and we feel sure that, as a good Volunteer and a gentleman of unimpeachable credit, Captain Moir Bryce will perceive the way that honour lies, and tell what he knows; for the question is not, as Mr Mackenzie contends, a private, but a public—and a very serious public—one.

### THE SOCIETY OF ARCHIVISTS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH.]"

The Society of Archivists and Autograph Collectors, Thornton Lodge, Thornton Heath, Surrey, November 30, 1892.

SIR,—The extraordinary revelations recently published in your columns respecting the now famous Burns Forgeries must have attracted many readers. They have even caught the notice of one or two London newspapers. The merest outsider can have but one opinion of them; and this, put into words, must inevitably tend to some such question as this—Why in Heaven's name do not the collectors, the librarians, the antiquaries, and others who lavish such wonderful sums in pursuit of their hobby—why do they not put a stop to these rascals' doings? Why do they leave it to the energy and public spirit of one or two private gentlemen and the proprietors and editor of an evening paper to bear the expense, and possibly incur the loss and unpleasantness of an inquiry which ought unquestionably to be threshed out by the machinery of a Court of Law? The answer is plain. It is not too late to mend. Let them even now say their *mea culpa*. More, let them combine to render such nefarious doings at least more risky for the future. A Society has already been formed of which I am at present acting as hon. secretary, and one of our principal objects is to present a combined front to the wiles of the forger.

It can only, I repeat, be properly done by combination. Such proceedings as those I have referred to ought not to be left to private individuals or newspapers, however public-spirited or generous they may be. They touch the honour of the whole world of letters. They lie especially within the province of such a Society as this. Many Scotsmen have already joined our ranks, and I am proud to think we number among us at least two of the gentlemen who have been instrumental in dragging these forgeries to the light of day. Some of the most famous collectors and antiquaries south of the Tweed have become vice-presidents and members, and it now rests with collectors and antiquarians in general to decide whether they will continue to allow discredit and ridicule to be cast on themselves and their pursuits. Our terms of subscription are framed to include as hon. members persons who, though not collectors themselves, yet take sufficient interest in collectors and their pursuits to join a Society formed for their protection.

Trusting you may find space for this somewhat lengthy epistle.—I am, &c.

H. Saxe Wyndham, Hon. Sec.  
of the Society of Archivists and Autograph Collectors.





## CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR STILLIE.

In the course of our former attempt to trace the forged autographs we received from Mr Stillie a leaflet headed "Manuscripts—English Experts," in the course of which he said :—

"From all my inquiries I cannot find out what qualifies, or what is the education for, the above Modern Profession.

"They appear to be Self-elected ; how such a profession was formed is hidden from the general public, and they hoist themselves into an important position, without the least responsibility to any party.

"About two years ago several London Experts formed a ring against the sale of some Scottish manuscripts in Edinburgh. They certainly deceived some buyers, so much so that a London dealer in autographs sent back his purchases, and at the re-sale they fetched higher prices.

"I have since had some experience about them. Having acquired a good many documents and letters of Sir Walter Scott, I sold eight of the letters to a Mr Caddell, of Manchester, and who by the advice of a local expert consulted Mr Davey, 45 Great Russell Street, London, and Mr Netherclift, 10 Bedford Row, London. These Self-Elected Experts, without inquiry, or any evidence whatever, pronounced these letters "palpable Forgeries." Having had only two transactions with Mr Caddell, and during a long and happy life my word having never been doubted, I have since more than once been desirous of cancelling these transactions.

"I wrote Mr Netherclift an explanatory letter relative to these letters, but prudence prevented any answer. He is called the great Expert at police courts ; I pity the parties."

There is more to the same effect, which we need not quote. The history of this transaction with Mr Walter Waithman Caddell, of Clayton Vale House, Manchester, is interesting, and we therefore think it desirable to present it fully, as it displays the extraordinary confidence with which Mr Stillie, who is never weary of basing the infallibility of his judgment on a certain amount of early acquaintance with Sir Walter Scott, was able to guarantee the genuineness of the Scott MSS. As we have said, we make no pretension to special knowledge of such matters, but certainly it appears to us that but very ordinary observation is needed to trace a striking resemblance between the genuine handwriting of "Antique" Smith and that of certain words in the MSS. By the courtesy of Mr Caddell we have been able to inspect them, and to go no further the same peculiar "A" to be found in the "Autograph" and "Audit" facsimiles is found in what we believe to be the bogus MSS. also. For the rest the correspondence will speak for itself.

Upon hearing that Mr Stillie might have some autograph letters, Mr Caddell wrote to him inquiring. Mr Caddell has no copy of this letter. On April 24, 1889, he received the following reply :—

19 George Street, Edinburgh, April 24, 1889.

SIR,—I have no list of my manuscripts just now, but will send it as soon as ready. I have a few fine specimen letters of Sir Walter Scott's, at 21s. each. Also of Richard Pigott 21s. Is Jacobite MSS. in your way—Prince Charles Edward, &c.—Yours truly,

J. A. STILLIE.

Mr Caddell asked Mr Stillie to send the Scott letters on approval (no copy.) On May 1st he received the following undated reply :—

SIR,—These [three] letters are all unpublished—and will allow 10 p. cent. discount, but will take back any not approved of. The price of Burns is £8. As soon as I find any other manuscripts—a list will be sent—or sent on sight.—Yours truly,

J. A. STILLIE.

On May 1 Mr Caddell sent to Mr Stillie a cheque for £3. 3s. in payment of the three letters, and asked him to send any more he had. On May 22d he received Mr Stillie's receipt for the three guineas, Stillie saying he would shortly send Burns autographs, &c.

On May 7th Mr Caddell received the following undated note from Mr Stillie :—

Five letters Sir Walter Scott, at 21s. each. On sight.

Burns—Two songs in his handwriting. These were sent to his publisher, Oswald, who made the scoring—£8. 8s.

Burns' Poems, the rare First Edition, Kilmarnock, 1786, with a proof portrait by Beugo inserted, also seven lines in Burns' handwriting, "They set their heads together," very fine copy, large margins, but the

corner of the title-page has been neatly mended, chastely bound in morocco, extra stamped leaves, £60—may be had on sight. Upon close inspection, a doubt was felt about some of the last pages having been supplied in facsimile. But it so well done, that it is quite unobservable. Hence the reduction.

On the same date Mr Caddell acknowledged receipt of the above and suggested a reduction in price. Mr Stillie wrote at the same time saying that the letters were all unpublished, and that he would allow 15 per cent. discount—would take back if not approved of. On May 9th Mr Caddell wrote saying he would give—

For Burns .....	£7 10 0
Five Scott letters.....	5 5 0

	12 15 0
Less 10 per cent. ....	1 5 9

Total .....£11 9 0

On May 11th he received the following undated reply :—

SIR, I accept the £11. 9s., and will make another search for some others—Henry Mackenzie—author of the "Man of Feeling"—Lord Brougham—Wellington, &c. Burns' 2 songs were sent to Johnson's Scots Musical Museum and will send you date and, if possible, a page of the work. J. S.

On May 11th Mr Caddell sent Mr Stillie a cheque for the above amount, and on the 13th the latter acknowledged receipt. On May 14th Mr C. received a letter from Mr Stillie, enclosing a further lot of autographs, &c. (nearly all forgeries.) On May 15th he received another letter offering a letter of Southey. On May 17th he returned above. On May 20th he sent the following letter :—

DEAR SIR,—I regret to be under the necessity of informing you that, having submitted the Scott letters which I purchased from you to an expert, he has pronounced them to be *palpable forgeries*. The documents purporting to be signed by "James" and "Prince Chas. Edward" he described as the "clumsiest forgeries he had ever seen." I make no doubt but that you have been imposed upon, and I hope that you may be able to recoup yourself ; but, of course, I must ask you to receive back the letters and to return me the amount which I paid for them.—Yours faithfully,

WALTER WATTHMAN CADDELL.

On May 22, Mr Stillie wrote the following letter :—

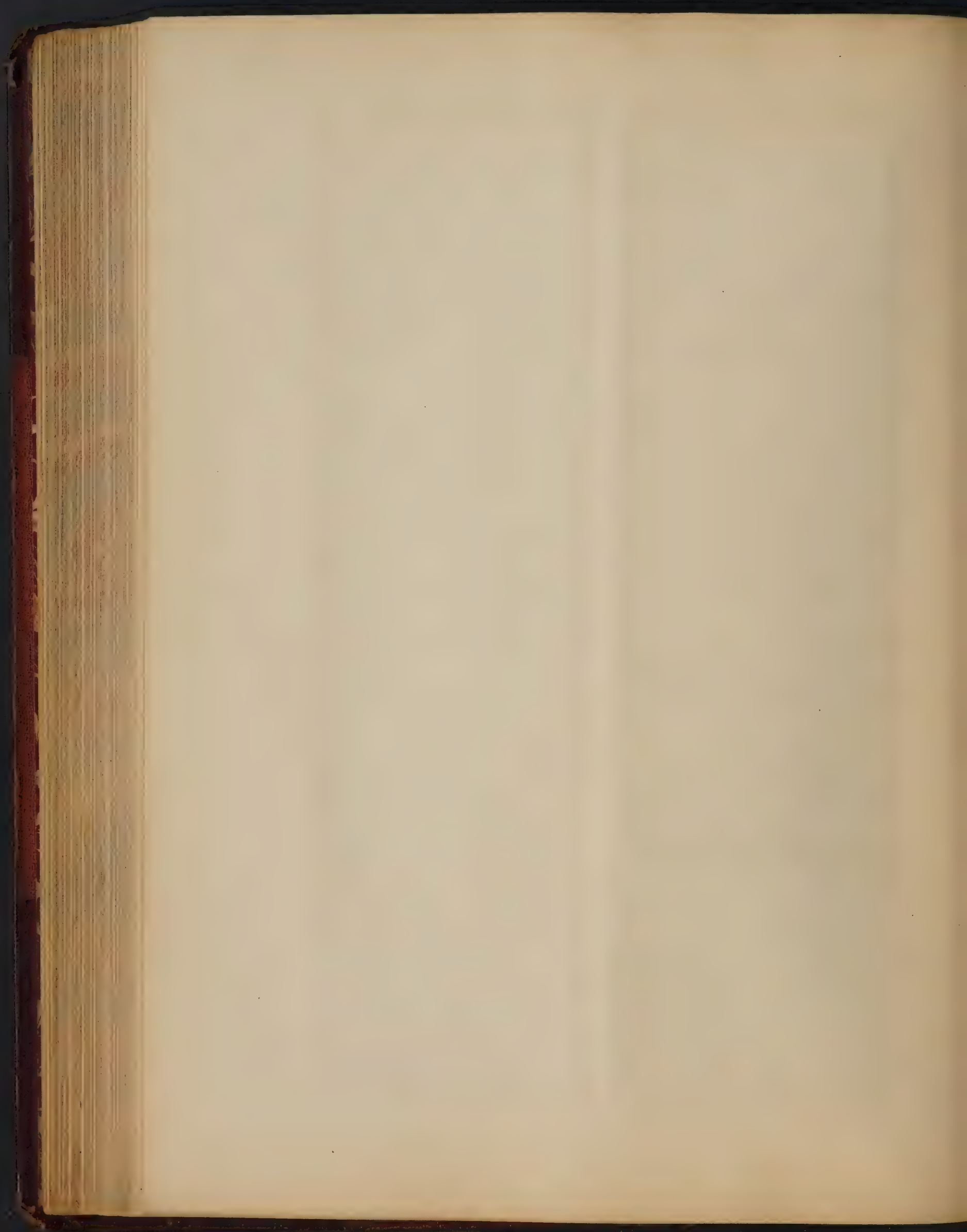
DEAR SIR,—Your note of 20th inst. has staggered me a little. I warrant Scott and every document I have as *genuine*. Having been an apprentice of a firm in which Sir Walter Scott was a partner, and had his continued friendship for upwards of fifty years, and copied many of his manuscripts, I should, therefore, know his handwriting more than any one else. Besides, these letters were to his law agent, Mr Ferrier, one of our high-class lawyers, and were got from his repositories, and sold by his daughter. The nature of the letters confirm this. As for the Jacobite documents, these at the great sale were examined by one of our Government genealogists, who, after careful examination, pronounced them all genuine. I bought many for Lord Rosebery, who is most particular what he buys; and this day I have had a call from Lord Torphichen, who holds a similar document to that which I sent you on sight. It has never been out of his charter chest ever since, and he at once pronounced it genuine. Your expert, if he is one, has sadly imposed upon you, and, to use his own words, "pronounced a palpable deception," or something worse. These scandalous assertions would not been passed over, if he had been in Scotland. I have written this long letter, as I feel aggrieved in this matter, and regret that you did not ask for an explanation before sending such an offensive note. I am frequently consulted both about Scott and Burns documents.—Yours truly,

J. A. STILLIE.

Mr Caddell, on May 24th, replied :—

DEAR SIR,—I thank you for your letter of 22d inst., which I am extremely glad to have, for I certainly hoped that you might be able to give me proof that the Scott letters are genuine—and from what you now say, I still hope so. I quite agree that you ought to be a good judge of Sir Walter's handwriting, and, of course, experts have been discovered in error before to-day. . . . And with regard to the expert—he was bound to give an opinion when asked for it, and if his opinion is wrong—well, you may call him "stupid," but I do not think you should say that he pronounced a "palpable deception." My communication to you was, of course, a private one.—Yours faithfully, WALTER WATTHMAN CADDELL.







\* An omission occurs here in our copy of the correspondence. Mr Caddell appears to protest against his letter being regarded as "offensive."

On May 25 Mr Stillie replied:—

DEAR SIR,—I duly received back Southey's letter. The late Mr Ferrier's boxes were only opened last October, and the old lady knows nothing their contents. I am so completely satisfied about the authenticity of the Scott's letters, that I have now bought up all I could get of them.—Yours truly,  
JA. STILLIE.

Mr Caddell replied on May 28th:—

DEAR SIR,—Your letter does not answer my question. Were these letters offered for sale by auction in London? Did you get them direct from Miss Ferrier?

To have known and had the continued friendship of Sir Walter Scott for "upwards of 50 years," you must have known him since he was 10 or 11 years of age, and you must now be 107 years or more of age. Did you mean upwards of 50 years, or was this a clerical error?—Yours faithfully, WALTER WATTHMAN CADDELL.

P.S.—When did you purchase the letters in question? Please answer all my questions, as they will assist me. The expert persists in his opinion that the letters are forgeries. W. W. C.

Mr Stillie on May 29 sent the following:—

DEAR SIR,—These letters were never offered for sale in London. I bought many from those who purchased the boxes of documents from Miss Ferrier and also at the sale of letters and documents by Messrs Chapman & Son, auctioneers, 11 Hanover Street, Edinburgh, 23d November 1887, and who, I will no doubt satisfy you, but I cannot be a party to it. My connection with Sir Walter Scott was on or before 1816.  
JA. STILLIE.

On May 30th Mr Caddell replied:—

DEAR SIR,—Your letter destroys the hope I had. For directly I showed these letters to the expert, he said—I know this lot; they came from so-and-so (naming the firm to whom you refer.)

I think you should ask them to give you any particulars they can, and especially if any doubt was, to their knowledge, cast on the authenticity of these letters.—Yours faithfully, W. W. C.

On June 8th Mr Caddell sent the following letter, with enclosures:—

SIR,—I have submitted the eight letters purporting to be in the autograph of Sir Walter Scott—which I purchased from you—to Mr S. J. Davey, of London, and asked him for an opinion as to them. I also asked him to be good enough to get me the opinions of any other experts he knew of. I now enclose you copy of his reply, by which you will see that in his opinion, Dr Scott's opinion, and Mr Waller's opinion, the letters are forgeries. I also enclose Mr J. G. Nethercliff's report, which is to the same effect. Under these circumstances I must again ask you to return the amount—viz., £7, 17s. 6d.—which I paid for the letters, together with the sum of one guinea which I have paid for experts' opinions.

Unless the amount is forwarded in due course I shall be compelled to take legal proceedings to recover it.—Yours faithfully, WALTER WATTHMAN CADDELL.

45 Great Russell Street, London, W.C. June 7, 1889.

DEAR SIR,—In my opinion the eight letters submitted to me, and purporting to be in the autograph of Sir Walter Scott, are forgeries.

I have shown them to Mr John Waller, one of the most experienced experts in England, and he pronounced them forgeries without a doubt. I have also sent them to the Rev. Dr Scott, who states that "they are most certainly not in the autograph of Sir Walter Scott." This gentleman is a very old collector of autographs. In addition to the above testimonies, I have submitted the letters in question to Mr Frederick George Nethercliff, one of the oldest professional experts in connection with police court cases, and I enclose you his verdict.

I feel certain that any competent person who examines these letters will agree with the justice of the above reports.—Yours truly,  
S. J. DAVEY,

To W. Watthman Caddell, Esq.,

10 Bedford Row, W.C., London, June 7th, 1889.

I have this day had submitted to me by Mr S. J. Davey eight letters bearing the signatures Walter Scott, and purporting to be entirely holograph letters of that celebrated novelist.

I am decidedly of opinion, as a professional expert in handwriting of more than forty years' standing, that the whole of these eight letters are forgeries.

FREDERICK GEORGE NETHERCLIFF.

To this Mr Stillie replied with the following curt rejoinder, dated 10th May, obviously a misprint for June:—

DEAR SIR,—I beg to repeat that I guarantee that the autograph letters sold you are genuine.—Yours truly,  
JA. STILLIE.

The attempt by Mr Caddell to recover his money failed, and his intention of appealing to the law was abandoned on the advice of his solicitors, who pointed out that the expense would be heavy, and that it would not be worth the candle. Certainly, however, we cannot reconcile Mr Stillie's refusal to take back

the manuscripts with his statement that "he had since more than once been desirous of cancelling these transactions."

Before closing this subject we may direct attention to an advertisement published by Mr Stillie in this year's "Burns Chronicle and Club Directory," edited by John Muir (Kilmarnock: D. Brown & Co.), in the course of which he says (we quote literally):—

"I have been sadly annoyed with certain self-elected Experts and Pretenders regarding Burns manuscripts in the West of Scotland, chiefly in Glasgow, one hitherto respectable firm wrote me a particular account of Forgeries of Burns in Edinburgh. I immediately challenged them for their Authority and required the name, but they giving me no Authority I wrote them that the statement was quite untrue, and a malicious Scandal on Edinburgh."

We do not know for certain what Glasgow firm is here referred to, though we have our own impression, but, surely it was scarcely a generous act on the part of Mr Stillie to charge any firm with having lost respectability because it dared to challenge—and as it has turned out to rightly challenge—his judgment. Notwithstanding the melancholy results of Mr Stillie's overweening confidence, we have not found anybody so uncharitable as to speak in a similar way of himself.

#### A CHALLENGE AND AN ANALYSIS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

Edinburgh, December 2, 1892.

SIR,—I perceive that the proper heading to your articles is now given—FRAUDS. In the face of the overwhelming testimony to the true character of the MSS., a discreet (?) silence is being observed by Messrs Mackenzie and "Bristo" Brown. The story of the cabinet has a strangely "antique" and familiar aspect. It reminds one of the "Mysteries of Udolpho." Has any one examined this piece of furniture? Let us have the dimensions of the secret drawer. It resembles the wizard's inexhaustible bottle (see Robert Houdin's Memoirs, 1859.) The difficulty of putting a quart into a pint bottle is a trifle compared with this. I venture to say the chest in which the Regalia was found would overflow with the spurious documents now flooding the market at home and abroad.

What does the Society of Antiquaries (Scotland) think of the present position of one of their number? I challenge Mr Mackenzie to appear formally at a meeting for the purpose of vindicating his action to his fellow-members. The honour of the Society is at stake, in my humble opinion.

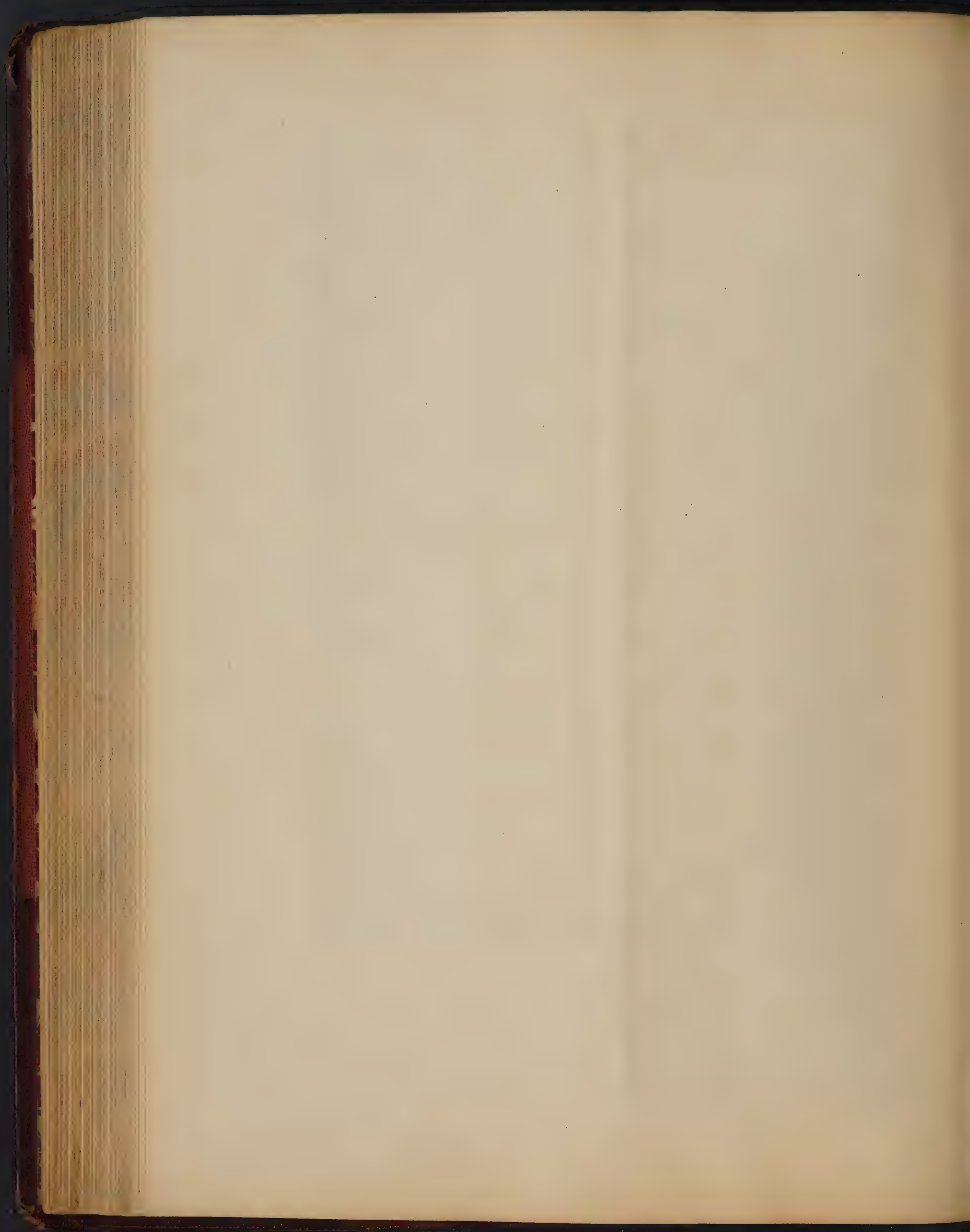
Through the courtesy of a sufferer I have been enabled to examine minutely some of the forged letters. I observed four out of six were torn through the middle and patched. On holding the paper up to the light, small holes will be found at intervals. These are the marks of the binder's threads, and show that the sheet had been folded and stitched. The paper has thus done a double duty—first, as fly-leaves or waste-papers of some book and afterwards a much less useful purpose. Numbers II. to V. in the undernoted list are thus "doctored."

Now as to the composition of the letters. Not only does the writing to a practised eye bear a strong family resemblance, but the style is painfully bald and commonplace. Details would be extremely awkward (*vide* Chatham, in the "Poor Man's Prayer.") Who would dream that the six writers whose letters purport to be written, 1757-1858, would commence almost identically as follows?—

I.—EDM. BURKE, Dublin (?), to Julia (?) Martin, London, 1757. "Dear Sir,—I have had your letter."

II.—SIR RA. ABERCROMBY, London (?), to R. A. M'George, Greenock, 1776. "Dear Sir,—I had your letter."

III.—ROBERT BURNS, Mossgiel, to Miss Glennie,





Ayr, 1786. "Madam,—I have your letter."

IV.—H. GRATTAN, House of Commons, to Sir John Newport (?), London, 1813. "My Dear Sir,—Your letter comes to me."

V.—(SIR) WALTER SCOTT, Abbotsford, to John Logan, Edinburgh, 1817. "Dear Sir,—I have your letter"

VI.—W. M. THACKERAY, Paris, to James Watson, London, 1858. "My Dear Sir,—I have received your letter."

In every case the letter winds up, "I remain" (&c.) The caligraphy is somewhat indistinct where (?) is placed.

These were selected for another purpose, and this extraordinary unanimity was noticed accidentally. The present tragedy has actually a comic aspect, in spite of the grave position in which some individuals have placed themselves. I trust more of these "antiques" will be examined.

May I ask your readers to send for publication a list of all GENUINE Burns MSS. now known, whether destined for the forthcoming Centenary Exhibition or not? Their present owners would do well to make their existence known. It would give data for branding the false Burns Clubs throughout the world, and might help greatly in this matter.—I am, &c.

VIATOR.

[The Committee of the Burns Exhibition or the Federation of Burns Clubs, with the co-operation of the Society of Archivists, are obviously the proper authorities for dealing with the question of separating the true from the false MSS. The mere publication in a newspaper would serve no good purpose, even if it were possible.]

#### THE PRICE OF GENUINE BURNS MSS.

A letter written by Robert Burns was sold on Wednesday (says the *London Globe*) for £15. At the same time and place five letters from the same hand fetched £34, while two of the poet's manuscripts brought in £12 and £10, 10s. respectively. These figures show how large are the prices obtained for genuine literary relics. It so happens that much doubt has lately been cast upon the reality of the documents of this sort submitted for sale from time to time, by discoveries which have just taken place in Edinburgh. Of course this *exposé* has created something like a sensation in Scottish circles, where anything relating to the national poet is naturally regarded with the keenest, not to say the most superstitious, interest. There is some reason to believe that, of late, there has been a widespread traffic in forged documents of the kind described—documents, nevertheless, issued at such a price that the collecting public necessarily had its suspicions promptly aroused. The incident will no doubt have at least the good effect of enlightening the hitherto purblind, and of bringing about an insistence upon complete pedigrees of manuscripts thrown upon the market in this fashion.

#### PRESS NOTICES.

The *Times* yesterday published an account of the MSS. disclosures from its Edinburgh correspondent, who says they have created something of the nature of a sensation. He only summarises, however, what we have already published.

In a note the *Literary World* says:—"The Edinburgh *Evening Dispatch*, we are glad to learn, has opened fire on the offenders in a series of vigorous articles, entitled 'The Great Forgeries,' and there is some prospect that these impudent frauds will now be laid bare. By means of *facsimiles* and letters the editor has abundantly shown the necessity of a careful inquiry. We hope the miscreants will meet with their deserts, in the form of long sentences, for attempting 'to obtain money under false pretences.'"

MR STILLIE appeals for consideration until he is able to reply to the statements about the MSS. Unfortunately he is suffering from illness.

We make an appeal to-day to Captain Moir Bryce to state what he knows about his collection.

We give an interesting correspondence which passed between Mr Stillie and a Manchester collector.





## THE AUTOGRAPH FORGERIES.

A strange story of literary forgeries has just been brought to light. It has been well known for over four years to the London dealers in autographs that a large number of forged Burns and Scott manuscripts were in the market, but it has been left to the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* to sift the matter to the bottom. This it has done in a series of interesting articles. That the fraud should have existed for so long can only be attributed to the "gullibility" of enthusiastic collectors, who, having got hold of something which is *prima facie* genuine, exhibit an extraordinary reluctance to entertain the possibility of its being a fraud. As a matter of fact, not a single example of the forgeries in question has turned out to be clever; and in most instances they were incredibly, transparently and impudently false. Chatterton brought an unquestionable genius to work in his manufacture of the antique, and even Ireland's forgeries had the questionable merit of deceiving clever men; but these Burns and Scott "relics" were from the first repudiated by experts, the paper, the penmanship, and many other circumstances, external and internal, more than sufficiently justifying this conclusion.

Without going into minute details, it will be sufficient to give a brief digest of the nearly thirty columns of *exposé* which has already appeared in our Edinburgh contemporary. In the first place these forgeries of letters, documents, and autographs appear to have been all executed in Edinburgh, and, in the second, a clue to their source was at length obtained by the publication, in August last, of "an unpublished letter of Robert Burns" in the *Cummock Express*. This letter was admittedly from the collection of a Mr. James Mackenzie, chemist, of 45, Forest-road, Edinburgh. This was followed by a letter from an anonymous correspondent, who questioned the genuineness of the Burns document and challenged its owner to submit the letter to the British Museum authorities. To this Mr. Mackenzie replied that the letter was "fully attested by those who are competent to judge, including a respected descendant of the author." More correspondence followed, in the course of which it came out that Mr. Mackenzie had been the owner of "The Rillbank Crescent Manuscripts," which had been sold in Edinburgh in May 1891, the authenticity of which was at the time strongly questioned, and among which five letters by Burns sold at prices varying between one and two guineas each. There is no reason to suppose that Mr. Mackenzie acted in anything but good faith, but his whole action in the matter has been exceedingly unwise, both in the secrecy which he has observed when questioned as to the sources whence he obtained the "relics" and in his manner of rebutting the charges of fraud which the various correspondents to the discussion urged against the manuscripts of which he is the possessor. In the course of one of his letters to the *Cummock* paper, Mr. Mackenzie quoted some poems as genuine from the Burns letters in his possession; one of these, entitled "The Poor Man's Prayer," had appeared in the *London Magazine* in 1766, when Burns was seven years old! The correspondence at length became personal, and was abruptly terminated by the editor.

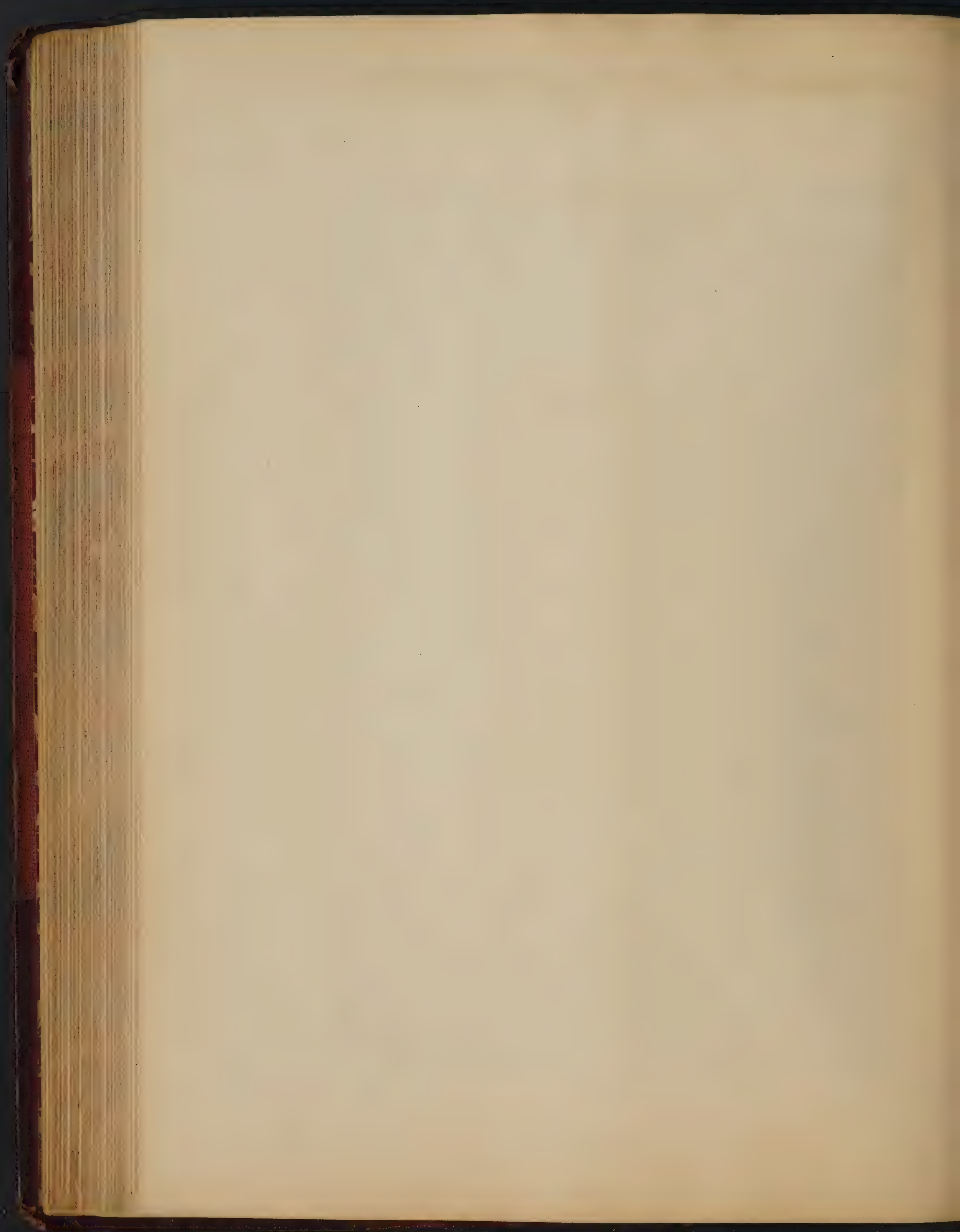
The matter was at this point taken up by the *Edinburgh Dispatch*, in which is also printed all the original letters from the *Cummock Express*. Starting with undeniable proof of the existence in Edinburgh of a manuscript factory, the editor

obtained a batch of these items of Burns, Scott and others relating to the Jacobite period, which had been pawned, and which, not being redeemed within the stipulated period, were sold by auction. Each of these items was placed between two sheets of paper (as is usual in the case of rare autographs), the outer one of which contained a description of the contents, with the information "Whiteford Mackenzie sale," with the amounts at which the items were acquired. This sale took place in March 1886, and a careful examination proves that not one of the autographs in question were then sold or offered, and the alleged prices were affixed simply with the idea of misleading the pawnbroker.

A direct clue to the perpetrator of the forgeries was obtained when the name of Mr. Brown, a bookseller of Bristol-place, Edinburgh, came into prominence in connection with these articles. Although the intermediary by whom a great quantity of these papers got into circulation, there is, as in the case of Mr. Mackenzie, no reason to suspect the bonâ-fide character of Mr. Brown's purchases and sales. In this, as likewise in the other, it is simply a question of lack of judgment. The immediate source whence Mr. Brown and others were offered, and in some cases obtained, the manuscripts in dispute, turns out to be a lawyer's clerk, of whose whereabouts nothing is known. The story put about by those interested is that in connection with the clearance of the cellars of the establishment of a deceased lawyer, some six or seven years ago, what are described as whole boxfuls of old documents were brought to light. From these the clerk made a selection, and, leaving his employment under unpleasant circumstances, the letters and other MSS., purporting to be in the writing of Burns, Scott, and others gradually passed into the hands of the bookseller named, who was satisfied in himself with the clerk's explanations—explanations which were varied according to prospective buyers. It was from this source that Mr. Mackenzie obtained his much-vaunted treasures. Specimens of the genuine handwriting of the mysterious clerk when compared with the forged documents indicate, in a very striking degree, certain peculiarities which can only lead to one conclusion. It is at this point that the matter now stands, and we do not see that much progress can be made until the forger is brought to book.

In connection with this exceedingly important subject a correspondent of *The Daily Chronicle* yesterday had an interview with Mr. S. J. Davey, the well-known expert, whose name will be remembered in connection with Victor Hugo's "journal." Mr. Davey states that he is only one of the several London dealers to whom parcels of these manuscripts have been submitted with a view to sale. He received a batch four years ago, and at once saw the forgery, which he has since constantly exposed in his journal, the *Archivist*. Some time since he received a request from a City firm to examine a parcel of manuscripts which were too valuable to be sent to his place of business. He duly called, and the parcel was produced from a safe, the would-be vendors explaining that they had received it from a client in America, and that a very high price was expected for the lot. The most cursory examination proved to Mr. Davey not only their spurious character, but the fact that they were manufactured at the same place as the articles which had previously been sent him.

It may further be mentioned that a large quantity of these forged documents have been purchased for, and are now in, the Lennox Library in New York, and that there are at least nine "genuine" autograph manuscripts of "Scots wha hae."

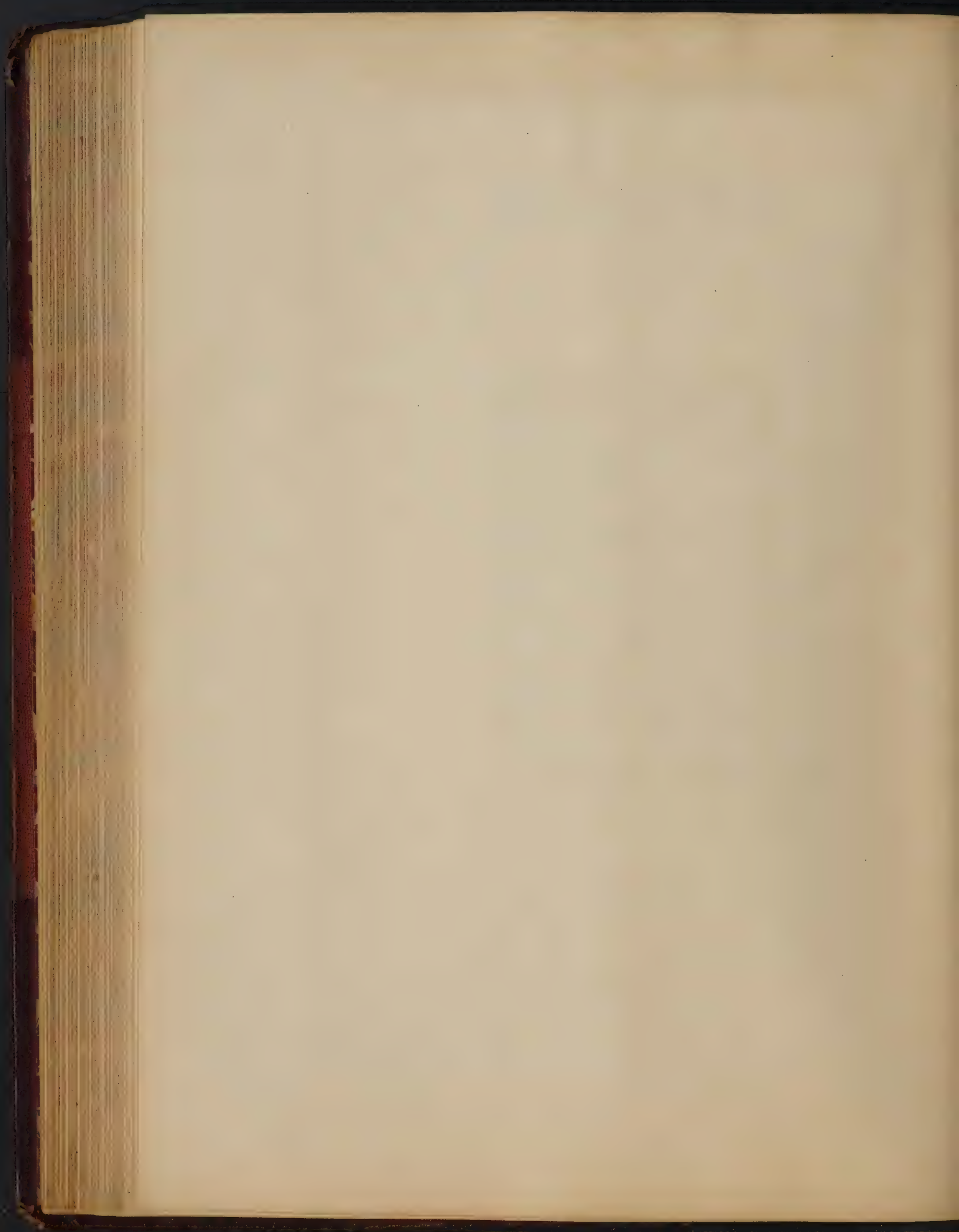




WE publish to-day some very interesting communications about the MSS. Forgeries.

WE also give a portrait of "Antique" Smith, the chief forger.

TO-DAY's post has brought us a formidable mass of correspondence respecting the MSS. Frauds, and we can only present some of the more noteworthy communications to-day. We may mention, however, that the case presents new developments almost daily, and that the proofs of the widespread character of the frauds accumulate in an extraordinary degree. We acknowledge with grateful thanks the frank and manly explanation which Captain Bryce gives to-day. Yesterday we referred to his 39 articles; to-day we give his Confession of Faith. It is the letter of one who has nothing to conceal, and whose desire is to extricate himself and the public from the webs spun by the MSS. "sophists" and forgers. The letter from Mr MacGillivray, W.S., showing that the so-called Argyll legal documents were likewise forgeries, and the interesting communication from Mr Aitken, himself a Kilmarnock man and a Burns editor, respecting a certain alleged Maitland Collection of Burns MSS. in the possession of Mr Stillie, will be read with deep interest. In the meantime we must allow them to speak for themselves. In the words of Mr Mackenzie, however, we may say that there is still much more to be told.





# THE MSS. FRAUDS.

PORTRAIT OF "ANTIQUE" SMITH.



This is a portrait of the man who will be known as "Antique" Smith, the forger of the MSS. It was sketched yesterday by one of our artists without the permission of Mr Smith.

## A MYSTERIOUS COLLECTION.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]  
12 Hornpton Street, Kensington, London, W.,  
December 1, 1892.

SIR,—I think that the time has come for me to help in the exposure you have made of MS. forgeries by describing my own experiences with some alleged Burns MSS.

As I have for some time been preparing an edition of Burns' poems for publication by Messrs Bell in the spring, I have naturally been anxious to see any new MSS. that came to light. In May last I received from Mr Stillie a copy of his catalogue, which contained a signed account of the numerous Burns and Scott MSS. which had passed through his hands. The article began—"My experience of these MSS. has been a great happiness," and it ended with a complaint that he had been "sadly annoyed with certain self-elected Experts and Pretenders regarding Burns MSS." In ordering some books from Mr Stillie I asked if he had any Burns MSS. then in his possession, whereupon he was good enough to send me a printed account of a collection which consisted principally of some fifteen letters from Burns to Mr Maitland, who was described as the poet's superior officer in the Excise. Most of these letters contained a copy of a poem. Mr Stillie wrote—"I enclose a note of one of [the] finest collections of Burns manuscripts I have ever seen. The price fixed in one lot, £150. . . . Of course all unpublished matter are copyright." Now, in his catalogue, Mr Stillie had spoken of Burns being in the habit of using Excise paper for his letters; I therefore asked him to send me for examination one of the letters dated 1786, and therefore written before Burns had any access to Excise paper. The letter came, with a note from Mr Stillie saying he did not attach much value to the opinion of London experts, and leaving unanswered a question as to the address of a lady who, as he had stated, was a descendant of Mr Maitland's, and a firm believer in these MSS.

I am not an expert in handwriting, but my eighteenth-century studies have left me tolerably well acquainted with the paper and ink then used, and I had, of course, examined very many of Burns' papers which are unquestionably genuine. When I received the Burns MS. from Edinburgh I felt no doubt that it was a forgery, though a clever one so far as the writing was concerned. The paper was almost parchment, very hard and very glossy, as unlike what Burns used as well could be, and the document had apparently been washed in the hope of giving the ink the correct tone.

The result, however, was anything but satisfactory. I then consulted the authorities in the manuscript department of the British Museum, because I should have been only too glad to purchase the papers if they had been genuine. At the Museum, however, I was told that a packet of papers with precisely similar dockets had been sent there a few days earlier, and that they had declined them. I afterwards consulted a leading dealer, without saying whence the paper came, and from him I received a still more plainly expressed opinion. I had, therefore, no alternative but to return the paper, and decline to buy the packet. Mr Stillie sent me a courteous reply, asking for the return of the statement about the Maitlands which he had forwarded, as it had cost him "valuable time and investigations" and saying that he and his friends were "perfectly satisfied with the MSS." I should have said that when I pointed out that one poem, described as unpublished, was really a copy of a published poem, but with a different name inserted, Mr Stillie reduced the price of the collection to £130.

Perhaps the full demonstration that has now been made of the existence in Edinburgh of a number of Burns forgeries will induce Mr Stillie to admit that he has been mistaken respecting the papers to which I have referred, and to announce—if the letters are still in his possession—that he has done some service to Burns by destroying them.—I am, &c.

G. A. AITKEN.

We have to thank Mr Aitken, who is well known to the world of letters, for letting us further into the secret of the forgeries. It may be some time before we come to know the real extent of these forgeries. To this end we reprint the description of sixteen "Burns Manuscripts" which he received from Mr Stillie. These are described as the "Maitland Collection," and a female representative of the Maitland family, whose "autograph" is on a volume which Burns presented to Mr Maitland, his superior officer in the Excise, and on which he expressed his gratitude for the influence he had exerted on behalf of the giver, is said to be still alive. Her address, however, as will be seen from our correspondent's letter, which we give above, Mr Stillie—possibly because he did not know it—refused to give. Another statement, on account of its falsity, we draw special attention to. "Burns," says Mr Stillie, "was frequently behind in his duties, and at one time Government gave notice of his removal." We subjoin Mr Stillie's circular referred to by Mr Aitken, a copy of which we happened to possess and intended dealing with:—

## BURNS' MANUSCRIPTS.

As this Maitland Collection has been recently found, it is considered necessary to give some knowledge of the Family.

John Maitland, Esq., was a Cadet of a prominent Family in Galloway, and entered into the Excise Office at Edinburgh. He was shortly appointed General Surveyor of Excise and Port Collector, Dumfries and Stranraer, but was also connected with the Excise Office, Edinburgh, and his son, James Maitland, was his assistant.

Mr Maitland had twenty-five Excise Officers under him, and Burns was one of them.

Burns was more a Poet than an Exciseman, and was frequently behind in his duties, and at one time Government gave notice of his removal: but Burns had good friends, especially Maitland, and this was not done.

Mr Maitland, being a high Official, could not associate with any of his officers, but he had a great love for Burns, and Burns' gratitude is seen in all these Documents sent to Mr Maitland, especially the fine old volume, with Inscription and Letter accompanied. One of the female descendants has her autograph on the volume, and is yet alive.

It was a misfortune that Burns' friends got him made an Exciseman, as neither his heart nor mind was in that occupation.

Burns was educated at a Parish School, but his talent for punctuation was extraordinary.

These Documents are very characteristic, and most affectionately expressed towards a Benefactor.

## ROBERT BURNS' ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS.

These MAITLAND Manuscripts have only lately been discovered.

The Introductory Letters and Notices to the Poems and Songs are all unpublished.

One of the Autographs on the printed Volume is still alive of the MAITLAND Family.

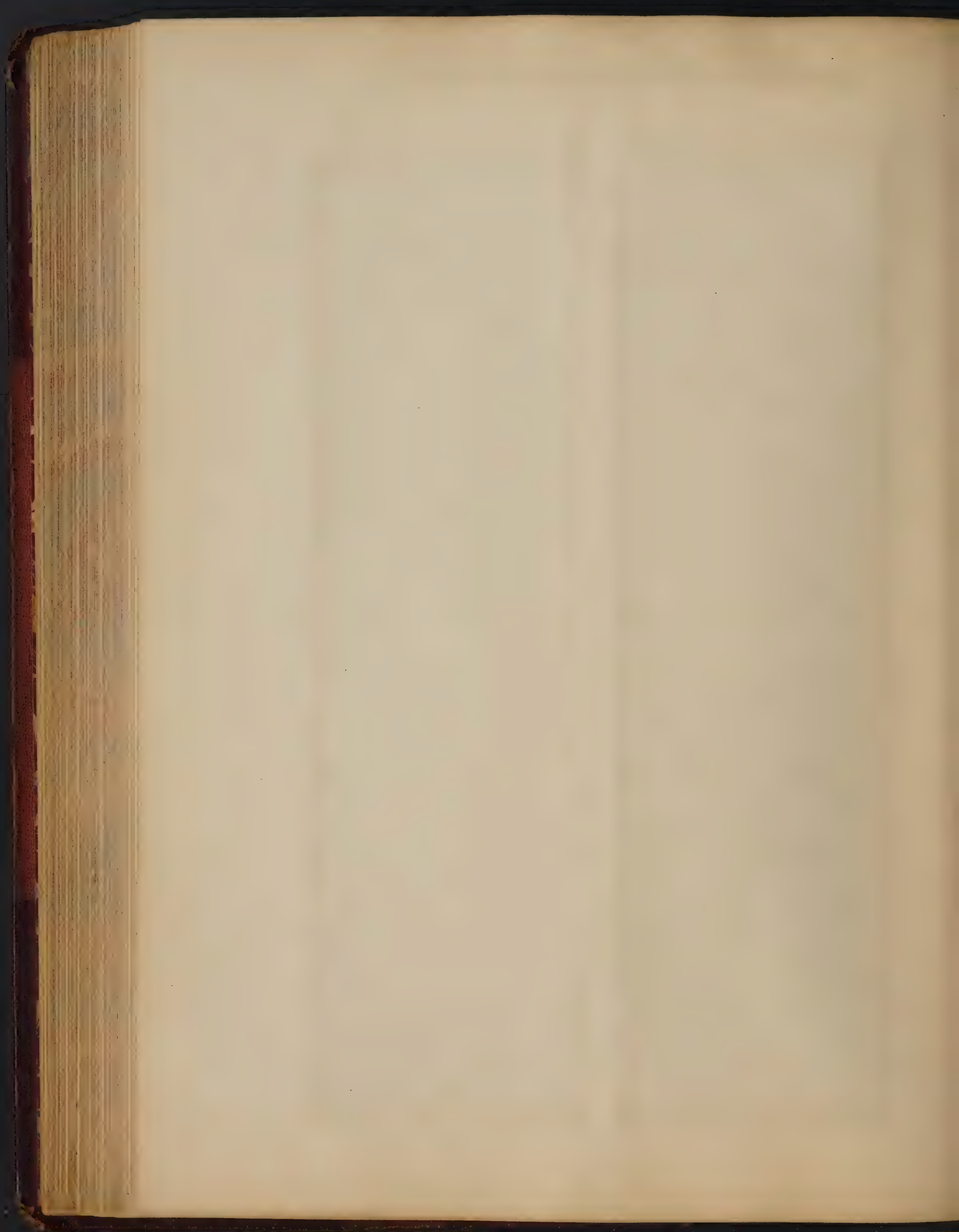
From BURNS' affectionate and good nature, and being a universal favourite, he gave away many of his Poems and Songs to friends, but he always mentions to whom he gave them, with his name, which is the cause of so many duplicates.

BURNS' ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS to JOHN MAITLAND, Esq., General Surveyor of Excise and Port Collector, Dumfries and Stranraer; also to Mr JAMES MAITLAND, his son and assistant.

BURNS was one of their officials in the Excise.

1. VOLUME—A PLAIN ACCOUNT OF THE NATURE AND END OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER, 8vo, 1735. Fine copy in the original binding—blue morocco, gilt and gilt leaves.







- To JOHN MAITLAND, Esq., as a Token of Esteem and Regard from ROBT. BURNS, Dumfries, Jany. 1794. *Unpublished.*
- With a grateful Letter accompanying the volume. Dumfries, 17 Jany. 1794. Enclosed in a case.
2. POETICAL INTRODUCTION AND NOTE. *Published.*  
Captain GROSE—  
"Hear, Land o' Cakes, and brither Scots."  
To Mr JOHN MAITLAND, Stranraer. The bearer of this note is my friend Captain GROSE, and I hope I have been sufficiently explicit in my Introduction—treat him as you have already ROBT. BURNS. 3 folio leaves. *Unpublished.*
3. POEM, "My honoured Maitland deep I feel." *Published.*  
To JOHN MAITLAND, Esq.  
A reply to an inquiry after my health. ROBT. BURNS, Jany. 1796. Signed, ROBT. BURNS, Dumfries.  
\*Sir Douglas, iii. 306, "My honor'd Colonel, deep I feel." [Ed. Dispatch]
4. AN ODE TO THE DYING OUT OF THE REGENCY BILL. 1789. 3 folio pages. *Published.*  
For Mr MAITLAND, Stranraer.  
From the Author, ROBT. BURNS.  
Initialed at end, Rt. B.
5. THE BRIGS OF AYR. 12 leaves. *Published.*  
To JOHN BALLANTINE, Esq., this poem is dedicated by his most obliged and humble Servant, ROBT. BURNS.  
With Letter to J. MAITLAND, Esq., Stranraer.  
Mossiel. *Unpublished.*  
I append hereto the annexed poems as a recompense for my delay in not writing you sooner than now, and will remind you of many a pleasant hour in our town of Ay. and I hope you will accept this Copy in the spirit of gratitude in which it is sent. ROBT. BURNS.  
At end, Oct. 1786, ROBT. BURNS.
6. FAREWELL LETTER to J. MAITLAND, Esq., Dumfries. *Unpublished.*  
My Dear Friend.  
Mossiel, Saturday—signed ROBT. BURNS.  
With Poem, "The Bonnie Banks of Ay." *Published.*
7. SONG, "Ye Flowery Banks o' Bonnie Doon." *Published.*  
Signed, ROBT. BURNS.  
With Letter to Mr JOHN MAITLAND.  
My Dear Sir.  
I send you herewith a Song I have just sent to Mr JOHN BALLANTINE—I think it should justly satisfy the critical taste of Miss MAITLAND, to whom I send my duty.  
Signed, ROBT. BURNS. *Unpublished.*
8. POEM, "Willie Chalmers." ROBT. BURNS. *Published.*  
With Letter to J. MAITLAND, Esq., Dumfries. *Unpublished.*  
Mossiel, 9 September.  
Dear Friend,  
I send Mr CHALMERS the verses headed, etc.  
I remain, yours very sincerely,  
ROBT. BURNS.
9. SONG, "My Bonnie Mary." *Published.*  
With Letter to Mr MAITLAND. *Unpublished.*  
I send you as promised, and as a gentle remembrance to you that my last message to you is still unanswered. I would like if you could meet me at the Globe Tavern, the first time you come this way. I am still praying for better weather that it might enable you to attend to business.  
ROBT. BURNS.
10. SONG, "The Winters of Life." *Published.*  
To J. MAITLAND, Esq. From ROBT. BURNS.
11. POEMS (Published), by an Ayrshire Ploughman, sent to Mr J. MAITLAND by the Author, ROBT. BURNS. The Ordination, a Satire, 14 stanzas—The Author's Earnest Cry and Prayer, 25 stanzas—and the Postscript, 8 stanzas, with a note—  
Please give your opinion upon the two foregoing, trusts with the Muses. You might pass on the MS. to Mr JOHNSTONE in Creetown.  
ROBT. BURNS. *Unpublished.*
12. LETTER to Mr JAMES MAITLAND, Stranraer. *Unpublished.*  
Mauchline, 26 May 1788. "As to learning his duties as an Exciseman. Quotes the *Æneid* and *Georgics* of Virgil, and with song, "The Chevalier's Lament." With an interesting Note about Prince Charles Edward, etc. and so Farewell.  
ROBT. BURNS.
13. LETTER to Mr JAMES MAITLAND, Stranraer. *Unpublished.*  
Mauchline, 15 Nov. 1788.  
My Dear Friend.  
A long and very interesting social letter, which includes the song of "The Lazy Mist," sent to JOHNSON'S Musical Museum. *Published.*
14. LETTER to J. MAITLAND, Esq., Dumfries. *Unpublished.*  
Mossiel, Tuesday, Sept. 1786.  
My Dear Friend.  
With the song of "The Bonnie Lass o' Ballochmyle." *Published.*  
Initialed by one of the MAITLAND Family.
15. SONG, "I Loved a Lass, a Fair One." Copy sent by BURNS to Mr MAITLAND, Dumfries, 9 Jany. 1791, asking him to assist him in discovering the Author.
- BURNS' ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT.  
"Ode on General Washington's Birthday—June 1794."  
Poem on the Independence of America. Sent in part to Mr CUNNINGHAM and Mrs DUNLOP.  
This is one of BURNS' scarcest Manuscripts, only part has ever been published.  
Burns generally wrote all his Manuscripts upon Government paper, and the paper of these Manuscripts have all been reported as hand-made paper for Government only, and previous to the period they are written upon.
1. Alexander Cunningham was a great favourite of Burns, and is introduced him both in his Poems and Letters.
2. Mrs Dunlop of Dunlop was one of Burns' most interesting Correspondents.

#### FRANK EXPLANATION BY CAPTAIN MOIR BRYCE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]  
Edinburgh, December 2, 1892.

SIR,—In connection with your trenchant exposure of the great MSS. frauds, I notice in this evening's *Dispatch* that you ask me to state the sources from

which I obtained the documents exhibited by me at the Naval and Military Exhibition held here in 1889.

I may explain that I became a member of the committee and a guarantor in order to express my sympathy as a Volunteer with the objects for which the Exhibition was instituted. The exhibits I sent consisted of arms, books relating to the Edinburgh Volunteers of 1795 and 1803, and, in particular, "Monro's Expedition with the worthy Scots regiment" (to which you drew special attention at the time), Italian Muster Rolls, and a variety of documents relating to the Covenanters, the Revolution, and the Jacobite risings.

The Covenanted and Revolution papers were almost entirely from the Gibson-Graig collection exposed for sale in Mr Dowell's in 1887. These were sold in a bundle, and catalogued as documents relating to Colonel James Douglas, who afterwards became the second Duke of Queensberry. A few others were obtained from various booksellers; while the Memorandum of the expenses incurred in the suppression of the Rebellion of 1715 (exhibited, although not inserted in the catalogue) was purchased by me at Messrs Lyon & Turnbull's Rooms, along with some of the Earl of Buchan's papers.

Eight of the documents relating to the '45 consisted of a selection from a small but exceedingly interesting collection made by Grossett, collector of Customs at Alloa during that Rebellion, and sold to me a few years ago by Mr W. Brown, bookseller, Princes Street.

The authenticity of these documents is undoubted. The remainder of the exhibits—say fully a dozen—came unquestionably from the "inexhaustible store" to which you refer. I made a careful examination of these at the time I acquired them, tested their dates and signatures, and concluded, perhaps with too much confidence in my own judgment and my knowledge of historical documents, that they were undoubtedly genuine. This also was the opinion of several friends of antiquarian tastes. Consequently I sent them to the Exhibition with the most implicit confidence in their authenticity. What has transpired in your columns this week, however, has completely shaken my faith in them. I shall, without delay, have them tested by acknowledged experts, and shall destroy, without hesitation, any pronounced spurious. —I am, &c. WM. MOIR BRYCE.

#### LETTER FROM MR WILLIAM MACGILLIVRAY, W.S.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]  
32 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh,  
December 2, 1892.

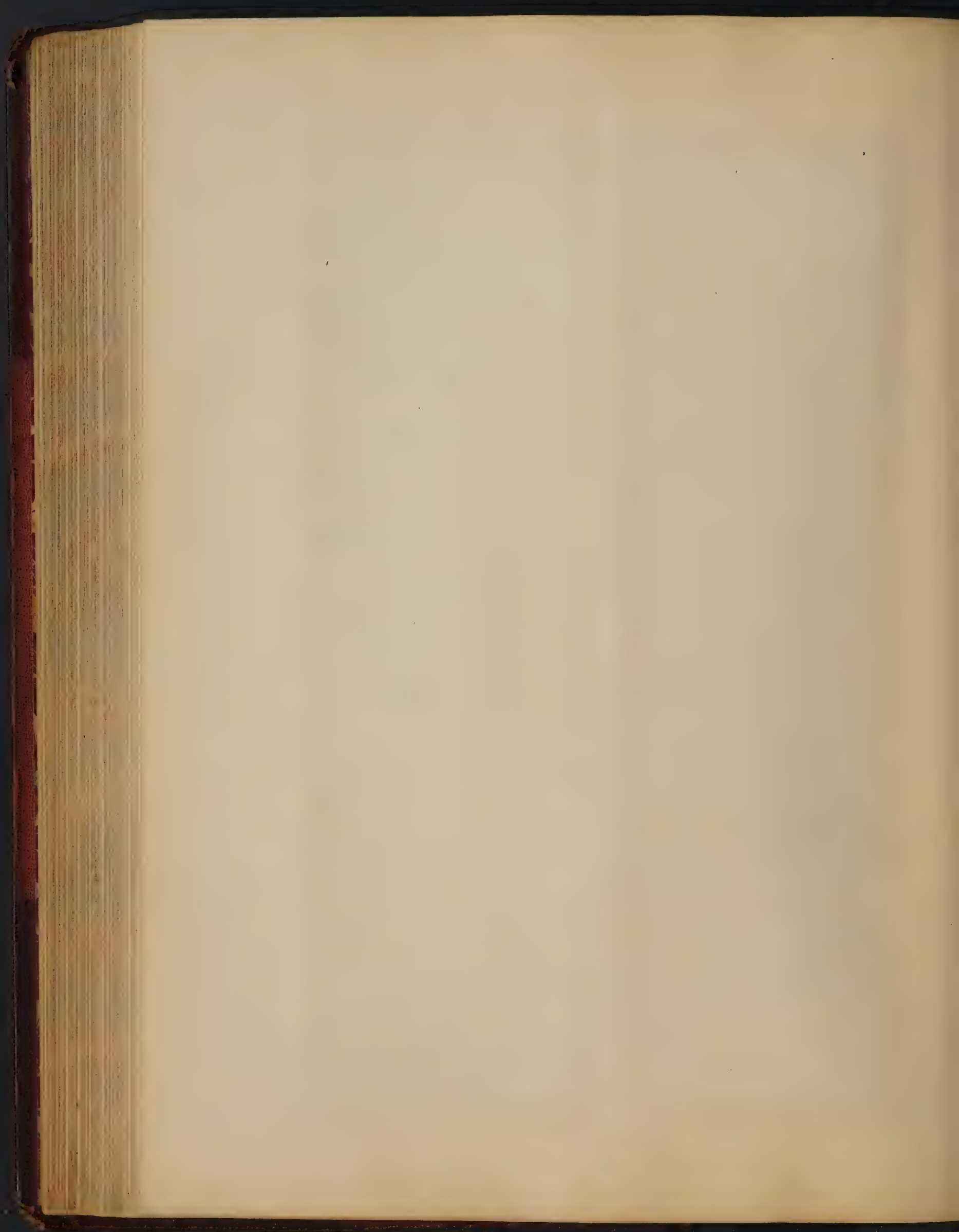
SIR,—Referring to a call I received from one of your reporters a few days ago, I now write to let you know the result of inquiries which I made in November 1887 with reference to certain MSS., having the general appearance of antiquity, which were advertised for sale with many others of the same kind by Messrs Chapman & Son, auctioneers, Hanover Street, in November of that year.

My firm, Messrs Lindsay, Howe, & Co., who are the Duke of Argyll's law agents, had been informed that some of those MSS. bore marks which indicated that they had formed part of the Argyll muniments, that they were being sold by a Mr Brown, bookseller in Bristo Place, who had obtained them from a man of the name of Smith, formerly a clerk of the late Mr Ferrier, W.S., who at one time had acted as agent for the Duke of Argyll.

The source from which the MSS. were said to have been derived naturally suggested to me the idea of their being genuine; and our first consideration on that assumption, of course, was to prevent the sale of them with a view to their recovery for the proper owner.

I called on Mr Miller, C.A., trustee for the late Mr Ferrier, to ascertain whether he knew anything of the MSS. He said he believed that Smith had taken a variety of old papers which had been in Mr Ferrier's possession, and had sold them to Mr Brown. He narrated Smith's story, which I have seen oftener than once repeated in your paper, to the effect that a great mass of papers had been lying loose on the ground floor and cellars of Mr Ferrier's office, that Mr Ferrier had given him permission to do what he







liked with them, and that acting on this permission he had appropriated those of them which appeared of most interest, and had disposed of them to Mr Brown the bookseller and others.

I may add that I then found that Mr Miller had several boxes of Argyll papers in his possession which had been with Mr Ferrier as the Duke's agent, and that he soon thereafter delivered these to my firm as agents for the Duke.

The fact of these boxes of papers having been in Mr Ferrier's possession naturally confirmed the impression which I then had that the papers advertised for sale by Messrs Chapman & Son were probably genuine and had been taken from Argyll boxes in Mr Ferrier's possession.

I then called at Messrs Chapman & Son's rooms and saw a considerable collection of MSS. prepared for sale, and amongst them six which had indorsements on them indicating that they had belonged to the Duke of Argyll. The indorsements on some of them were distinct, while on others they had been to a greater or less extent obliterated.

Mr Chapman allowed me to borrow these MSS. with Argyll markings on them for examination.

After my interview with Mr Chapman I called on Mr Brown, who expressed his extreme regret that he should have been induced to purchase the papers from Smith. He said it was in the previous April that Smith came to him, and having represented to him the manner in which they came into his possession, as explained above, he was induced to purchase them.

He stated that he afterwards called on Mr Ferrier, who gave him to understand that he would not interfere with Smith disposing of the papers, and that Mr Ferrier then gave him certain old autographs himself. Subsequently he said he sold to him various books and other articles of interest, including business books of his previous firms, some of which were more than 100 years old, and related to the business of many distinguished families for whom the Ferriers had acted as law agents.

Sometime afterwards he said Mr Ferrier (or Miss Ferrier after Mr Ferrier's death, I have forgotten which) proposed to sell to him several boxes of old papers, some of them, at all events, containing Argyll papers. He said he did not think it would be right for him to purchase these, that he did not do so, and that he mentioned the existence of them to Sir Noel Paton with a view to the Duke of Argyll being made aware of them. I believe it was through that gentleman that the fact of their existence came to be known to the Duke, and my firm then took steps, as above mentioned, for their recovery from Mr Ferrier's trustees.

I ought to mention that Mr Chapman voluntarily told me when I saw him that the documents bearing the Argyll indorsements, to which I have referred, and I think others of the collection also, had been submitted to various experts, and that the general impression of these experts was that they were not genuine.

I cannot myself pretend to be an expert in such matters; but, at the same time, I confess that, my attention having been thus called to the question of their genuineness, they appeared to me on examination to have a suspicious appearance. They were written on old paper frayed (artificially as appeared to me) at the edges, but they looked as if they had been recently soiled in a uniform way, and as if done on special purpose, quite unlike the soiling by lapse of time usually presented by genuine old documents.

The handwriting, too, of them all, although the various documents had a general appearance of being holograph of different persons, showed a great similarity in some of its features, especially in certain letters.

I showed the documents to some of the best antiquarian authorities in Edinburgh, and in particular to one gentleman who has had more experience than any one else I know in ancient family MSS., and the opinion of them all was that they were either old copies or recent forgeries, and that they certainly were not genuine originals.

Mr Brown at once expressed his willingness to give them up to the Duke of Argyll without reference to the question as to whether they were genuine or not; and, with his sanction, my firm obtained possession of them from Messrs Chapman.

Mr Chapman stated that he would put a note on his catalogue to the effect that they were withdrawn from the sale, and he thereafter sent my firm a copy of the catalogue with the following note prefixed to it:—

"Note.—Nos. 13, 27, 61, 84, 101, 141 have been acquired by the Duke of Argyll."

My firm objected to the terms of the note as being misleading, and Messrs Chapman & Son then consented to delete it, and to suppress the copies of the catalogue containing it.

The Duke was advised by high antiquarian authority to destroy the documents thus recovered, because, if they were retained amongst his muniments, they

might hereafter lead to misconception with regard to their character; but it was arranged to postpone the destruction of them in the meantime, in the view of their possibly being useful, in the event of proceedings being taken by any one in connection with the mass of MSS. issuing from the same source, the genuineness of which was then supposed to be very doubtful.

I send herewith for your examination the six documents above referred to, along with two prints of Messrs Chapman's catalogue, one containing the note above referred to, and the other omitting it.

The numbers in the note correspond with the numbers of the six documents in the catalogue.

Be good enough to return the documents and the prints of the catalogue when your purpose with them has been served.—I am, &c.

WM. MACGILLIVRAY.

#### PRESS COMMENTS.

To-day's *Publishers' Circular* says:—"Some sensation has been caused by a series of articles which have appeared in the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* with regard, to forged MSS. of Burns, Thackeray, Scott, and other literary notabilities. It is stated that a regular trade in these spurious documents has been carried on in the northern capital for years, and that several booksellers as well as private collectors have been victimised. At the time of writing the investigations are proceeding, but enough has already been said to show that booksellers and dealers should take particular means to test the genuineness of any document submitted to them."

To-day's *Athenæum* says:—"The discussion on the forgeries of Scottish MSS. of which we have spoken before has, thanks to the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, entered upon a new phase. Mr A. H. Smith, formerly clerk to the late Mr Ferrier, W.S., has virtually confessed his share. He some years ago (so he says) got hold of some papers which Mr Ferrier desired him to destroy as rubbish. Some of these turned out to be valuable, and the prices obtained for them by Smith tempted him to produce others not so authentic. A large collector and dealer in MSS., whose name has been accepted as a guarantee for the genuineness of those which have passed through his hands, now reveals that he accidentally discovered a quantity of these treasures in the secret drawer of an old cabinet which he purchased. Unfortunately some of the most valued of these treasures have been proved to be counterfeits. Where the cabinet came from is not yet disclosed. Meanwhile the spurious documents, including letters of Queen Mary, Claverhouse, Jacobite chiefs, Walter Scott, and Thackeray, imitated poems by Burns, &c., have been for the last five years scattered broadcast over Scotland and England, the United States, and the Colonies. The *Dispatch* will probably reprint in some separate form the whole story, together with numerous *fac-similes* of the documents and of Smith's handwriting. It will form a useful *vide mecum* for the amateur collector of literary curiosities."

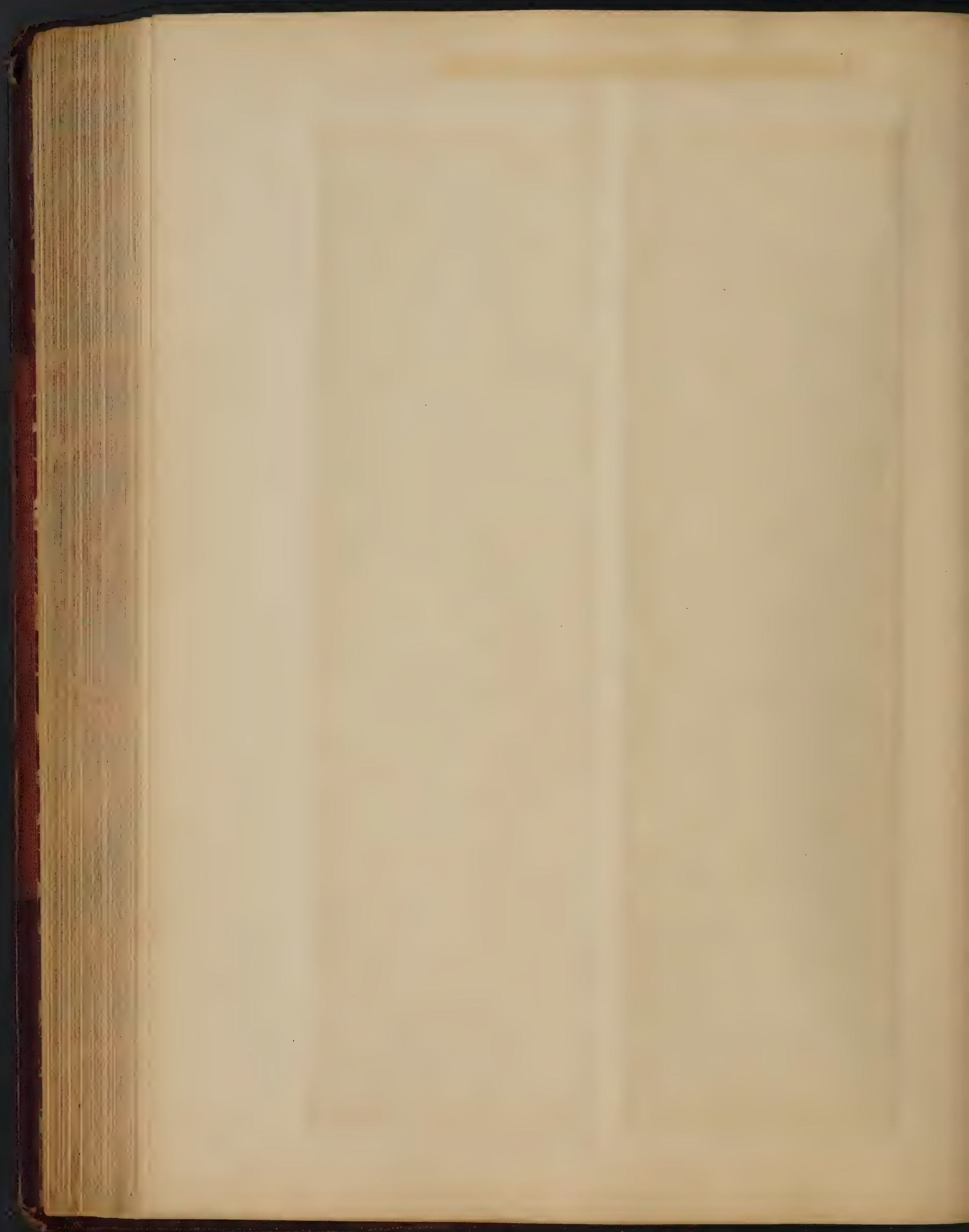
The *Scotsman*, at the conclusion of a long article, says:—"The matter must now be probed to the bottom, in the interests of the public and of justice, as well as for the sake of the many antiquarian and literary considerations involved, including the vindication of the genuineness of those real historical and autobiographical documents of which the factory-made specimens are poor and coarse imitations. The police have been slow in taking action. The presumption is that they desire to be sure of their ground, and to have all the threads in their hands. Of this the public are anxiously waiting the proof."

#### A BATCH FROM AMERICA.

The London *Daily Chronicle* yesterday summarised what it called our thirty columns of narrative, and wound up by saying:—

In connection with this exceedingly important subject a correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle* yesterday had an interview with Mr S. J. Davey, the well-known expert, whose name will be remembered in connection with Victor Hugo's "journal." Mr Davey states that he is only one of the several London dealers to whom parcels of these manuscripts have been submitted with a view to sale. He received a batch four years ago, and at once saw the forgery, which he has since constantly exposed in his journal, the *Archivist*. Some time since he received a request from a City firm to examine a parcel of manuscripts which were too valuable to be sent to his place of business. He duly called, and the parcel was produced from a safe, the would-be vendors explaining that they had received it from a client in America, and that a very high price was expected for the lot. The most cursory examination proved to Mr Davey not only their spurious character, but the fact that they were manufactured at the same place as the articles which had previously been sent him.







A LOCAL INDUSTRY has been flourishing among us of late years, to an extent unsuspected by honest citizens—no other than the manufacture of historic MSS. and of literary autographs. Analogy ought, perhaps, to have prepared us for the fact that, as hypocrisy is the shadow of virtue, so spurious documents may be expected to abound in a home of historic incident and intellectual activity. But that general principle, even if accepted, will not console the public under the discovery that the good name of Edinburgh and of its literary products has been brought into reproach by an unscrupulous traffic in bogus manuscripts, purporting to come from the hands of the most eminent men of letters and action of former generations. The credit of bringing the truth to light is due to the *Evening Dispatch*, which, taking up a comparatively slight clue, has followed it up with such persistency and industry that it may now be freely accepted, as a demonstrated thing, that an extensive system of literary frauds has existed, and has been more or less known to the police and to dealers in antiquarian manuscripts and autographs, for several years past. The first question that naturally arises is, why, if this is the case, were not steps taken long ago to trace out the offences and bring the offender or offenders to justice? Why was it left to the enterprise of a newspaper to perform a service which so closely concerns the honour of the nation and its illustrious dead, as well as the interests of justice? Something may have to be said on that score by-and-by. Meanwhile the Edinburgh public, to its no small shame and surprise, has awakened to the fact that there is a factory in its midst which is able to turn out, in large or in small lots, Burns and Scott MSS., Jacobite correspondence, autograph letters of Mary Stuart and of Cromwell, and, in short, whatever in the shape of literary relic or national document happens to be in demand. Not only has the existence of the industry been ascertained; considerable progress has been made in tracing its methods of fabricating the goods and placing them on the market.

The story is a strange one; and it has only as yet been half told. The thorough public exposure must be left to the police and judicial authorities, who may be presumed to be taking their somewhat tardy steps in the matter. But it may be taken that suspicion was first aroused and inquiry made through the circumstance that the supply of precious documents in the handwriting of famous authors and other celebrities began to exceed the demand. The value of such relics depends upon their rarity, combined of course with their authenticity; and when it was discovered that in certain quarters an unpublished song of Burns or letter of Sir Walter Scott was to be had for an old song, men of judgment naturally began to think that there was something wrong. Now that the public has been let partly into the secret, it is known that a great portion, if not all, of the suspicious MSS. came

from a single source; and an explanation of the marvellous supply of marketable documents has been given which reads in many respects like a romance. A late respected firm of Edinburgh law agents had, it is said, among its clients historic families and men of literary eminence. The agencies were removed, but there remained a wonderful residue of old papers, and before the firm finally died out these were committed to the hands of a clerk in its employment, a person of the name of Smith, with directions that they should be destroyed. He kept them instead, and out of this rubbish heap he sifted and sold treasure trove to an extent that shows that it must have been the most extraordinary literary find of this or any other age. It was like the inexhaustible bottle; for the more that these Ferrier papers yielded, the more, apparently, there was left. Now, without entering into the question of whether the story is credible—that will probably be a question for the Courts—there was surely enough in it, especially taken in connection with the appearance of the manuscripts themselves, to breed suspicion and caution. For there can be no doubt that the great bulk, at least, of the papers said to be recovered in this extraordinary way were forgeries, and clumsy forgeries. A few genuine documents there probably were, just as a sound strawberry or two may sometimes be found placed on the top of a mouldy mass of decay. But comparison of paper, handwriting, ink, and other particulars leaves no doubt in unprejudiced minds that the quantities of autographs and letters with which the market has been flooded from this quarter are impudent fabrications. Nevertheless, there is every reason to believe that numerous specimens of them have been sold privately or by auction, presented to public institutions, and even catalogued and shown in exhibitions, as genuine. It may naturally be asked, What were the dealers and collectors about who were the medium of thrusting these false wares on the world, that they did not detect and expose the fraud that was being committed upon them and the public? Perhaps the strangest circumstance of all is that the men who saw most of the manufactured manuscripts, and had most cause for marvel and doubt on account of the lavish scale of their production, were apparently those who were most firmly convinced of their genuineness, and who were ready to stand sponsors for them, after others had pointed out their glaringly spurious character. Mr Mackenzie, the owner of the "Rillbank Crescent Collection" of Burns MSS., for example, has in this matter furnished melancholy illustration of the errors that await the relic-collector who allows his enthusiasm to outrun his judgment. He it is who has, unwittingly or not, been the means of bringing this mysterious traffic to light—in the first place, by the sale some time ago of part of his collection by auction, thus bringing the dubious character of its contents prominently to the knowledge of the buyers and sellers of auto-

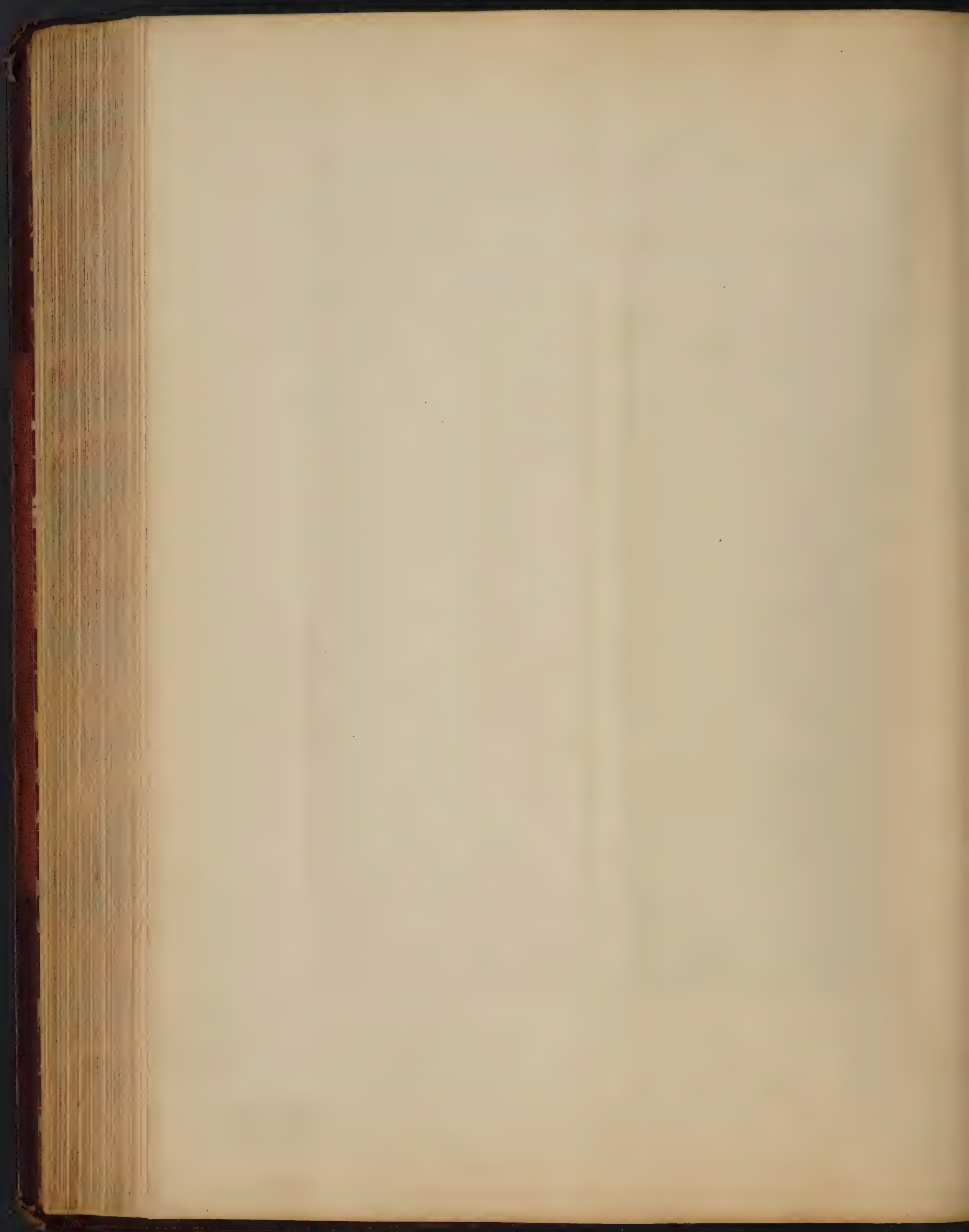




graphs, and more lately by bringing to the notice of an Ayrshire paper and of the public certain unpublished MSS. poems of Robert Burns, for the authenticity of which he was ready to vouch. His letter provoked a correspondence and an investigation, and finally it has been shown by a lynx-eyed critic that the verses of a "Poor Man's Prayer," which were quoted as the genuine product of the muse of the Ayrshire Bard, as proved by an autograph copy addressed to his brother Gilbert, were really published in 1766 as the work of "Simon Hedge, Labourer," at a time when Burns was a little boy in petticoats. Other samples of "unpublished Burns poems" have fared no better; and the choice is left to us of believing that the poet began writing and printing verse at the early age of seven, that he made a mean and knavish attempt to palm off as his own the lines of a forgotten poetaster, or, finally, that some later hand had been forging his name, and at the same time maligning his genius. The last is the only tenable view; and Mr Mackenzie, no doubt, feels grateful that the pitfall into which he has tumbled, and has led others, has been pointed out, and that he has the means of setting himself and the poet right by purging the dross of the Rillbank Crescent collection from the gold. From a statement made to gentlemen who waited upon him, it appears that the peccant documents were found by him in a mysterious cabinet, the spring of the secret drawer of which he accidentally touched. But the cabinet is like the tortoise in the Hindoo scheme of cosmogony: it complicates the circumstances without bringing us nearer to the creative source of these MSS., and Mr Mackenzie must be thoroughly convinced by this time that secrecy and mystery in a thing that is of public import is the worst possible voucher of authenticity and good faith.

The same advice to recognise the overwhelming and unanswerable proof that has been given of the spuriousness of the documents placed in their hands may be given to the other collectors and dealers who have been mentioned as having been imposed upon by goods issuing from the Factory. They owe it to themselves and to the public to be foremost in courting and demanding inquiry into the scandal. To the credit of many of them it has to be said that at once, upon ascertaining that they had been deceived, they took care that the loss and the mystification should not go beyond themselves to the public. There are others besides Mr Mackenzie who do not know that

they have been deluded or do not own to it. For one venerable member of the bookselling trade, who appears to insist that he and the public are the victims of a conspiracy, not of forgers of Burns and Scott MSS., but of experts, a feeling of sympathy rather than blame would in any case be entertained. But because cocksuredness sometimes increases in proportion as judgment grows weaker when men verge towards four score and ten, that is no reason why truth should not out, and fraud should remain unexposed and unpunished. As has been indicated, there is a good deal more involved in this matter than in an ordinary set of fraudulent transactions. A deliberate course has been followed of vitiating history and degrading the genius and the very handwriting of the great men of our literature for the purpose of making money. No one could believe in the genuineness of these Burns forgeries, for instance, without thinking less of Burns. The business of fabricating them has been continued with absolute impunity for years. There is reason to believe that literature and history are not the only pages on which the ugly finger-marks of the forger can be traced. The signing of pictures by masters, old and recent, and the vamping up of other curiosities in other departments of art, are believed to have varied the trade of inventing Burns' poems and Jacobite relics, writing the correspondence of Scott and of Thackeray, juggling with autographs and book-plates, and forging false dockets. It is supposed on good grounds that more than one hand has been at work in producing and circulating these spurious articles, for which men who ought to have known better were simple enough to find a market. It is not easy to imagine a crime of the type more base and more mischievous; and it is aggravated by the fact that it could only have been committed by one who, in addition to a perverted ingenuity, possessed a considerable share of education and culture. The matter must now be probed to the bottom, in the interests of the public and of justice, as well as for the sake of the many antiquarian and literary considerations involved, including the vindication of the genuineness of those real historical and autobiographical documents of which the factory-made specimens are poor and coarse imitations. The police have been slow in taking action. The presumption is that they desire to be sure of their ground, and to have all the threads in their hands. Of this the public are anxiously awaiting the proof.

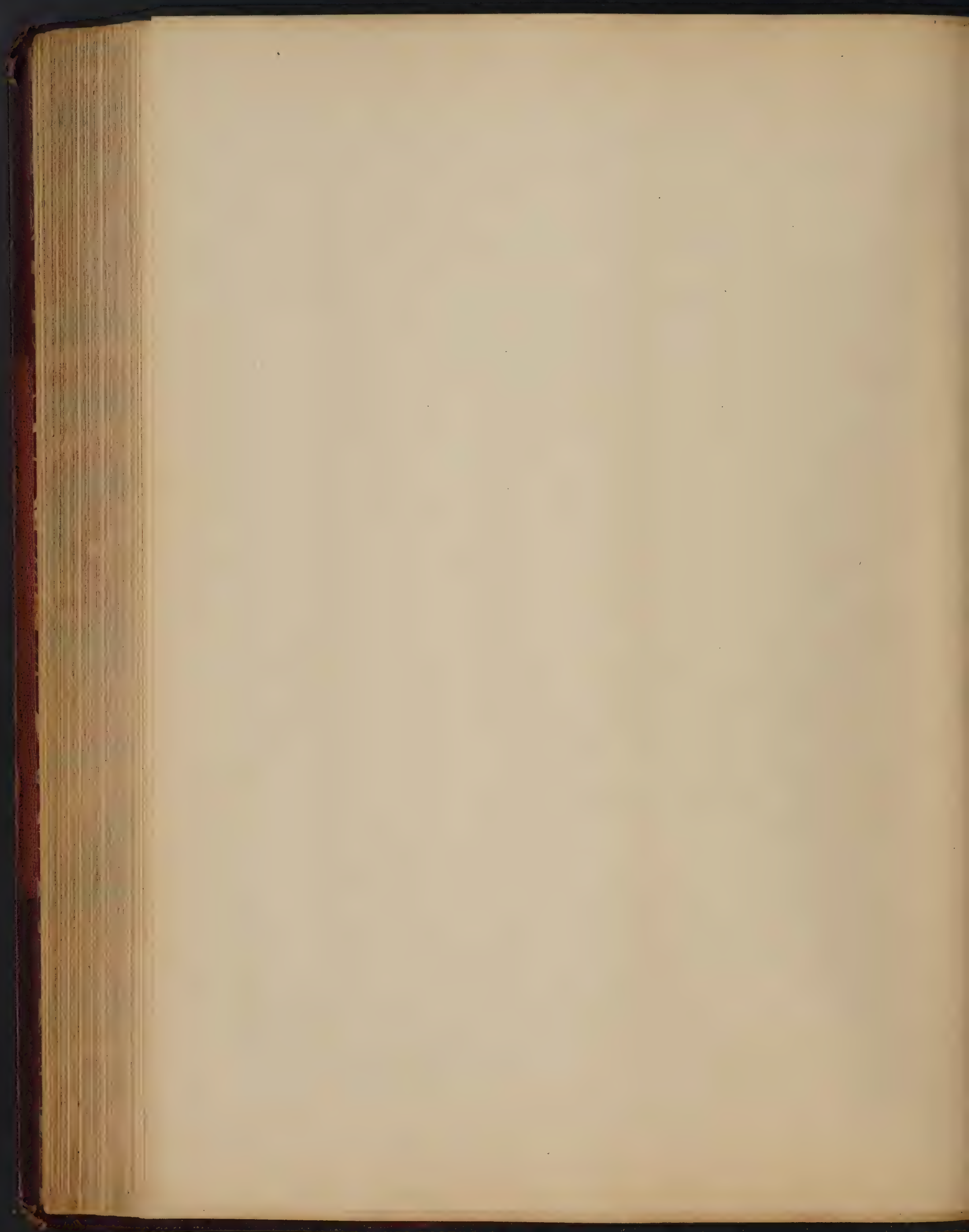




THE ATHENÆUM DEC. 3, '92

THE discussion on the forgeries of Scottish MSS., of which we have spoken before, has, thanks to the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, entered upon a new phase. Mr. A. H. Smith, formerly clerk to the late Mr. Ferrier, W.S., has virtually confessed his share. He some years ago, so he says, got hold of some papers which Mr. Ferrier desired him to destroy as rubbish. Some of these turned out to be valuable, and the prices obtained for them by Smith tempted him to produce others not so authentic. A large collector and dealer in MSS., whose name has been accepted as a guarantee for the genuineness of those which have passed through his hands, now reveals that he accidentally discovered a quantity of these treasures in the secret drawer of an old cabinet which he purchased. Unfortunately some of the most valued of these treasures have been proved to be counterfeits. Where the cabinet came from is not yet disclosed.

MEANWHILE the spurious documents, including letters of Queen Mary, Claverhouse, the Jacobite chiefs, Walter Scott, and Thackeray, inedited poems of Burns, &c., have been for the past five years scattered broadcast over Scotland and England, the United States, and the colonies. The *Dispatch* will probably reprint in some separate form the whole story, together with numerous facsimiles of the documents and of Smith's handwriting. It will form a useful *vade mecum* for the amateur collector of literary curiosities.

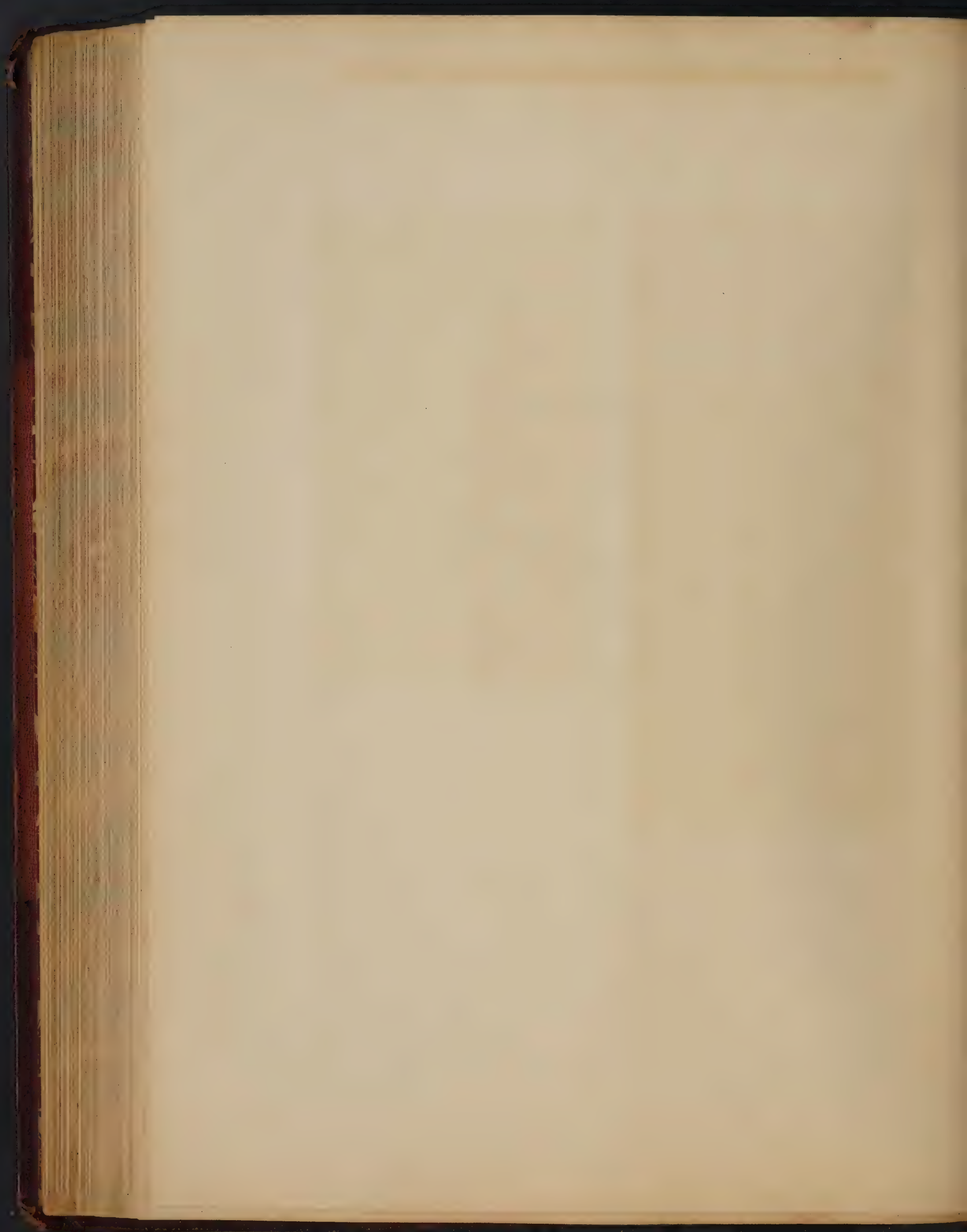




**The Archivist.** [DEC., 1892.

In conclusion it may not be out of place to reiterate the warning we have so often given to our readers against being victimised by the wholesale forgeries of Burns' letters, these fabrications are being offered to collectors in a most barefaced way. It is a pity that Burns, who when living loved honesty and truth, should after his death have his name associated with lies and fraud. Will it require another address from a great poet, "To the Sons of Burns" to stop this iniquity, and expose—

"These letters, false beyond all forgery—  
Not just handwriting and mere authorship,  
But false to body and soul they figure forth."





A LETTER is published to-day from Mr James Mackenzie, in which he makes an explanation as to the spurious MSS. known to be in existence. The few "Burns MSS." he had disposed of have, he says, been secured by him, so that no one will be permitted to suffer loss at his hand. As to the remainder, he has "dealt with them as such documents deserve to be treated, so that in future no one will be troubled with them." Mr Mackenzie adds that, fortunately, "few persons have had experience of forgeries like the present," and that he "has had to pay for his experience."

The *Athenæum* of Saturday says:—"The discussion on the forgeries of Scottish MSS., of which we have spoken before, has, thanks to the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, entered upon a new phase." It indicates the nature of this, and adds:—"The *Dispatch* will probably reprint in some separate form the whole story, together with numerous *fac-similes* of the documents and of Smith's handwriting. It will form a useful *adde mecum* for the amateur collector of literary curiosities."

MR MACKENZIE ON THE SPURIOUS MSS.  
December 3, 1892.

SIR,—Your notice in to-day's paper of the spurious Burns MSS., with which my name has been associated as one of those who have been, unfortunately, taken in, calls for some remarks. Personally, I am glad the truth has come to light, however unpleasant it may be. Of late statements of fact have been so much mixed with what was sensational and untrue, that I have refrained from taking any notice of the matter. Had I been consulted at first, before so offensive statements were published, I would have rendered any assistance in my power to trace the forger; but now there remains nothing to be said by me that has not been published. Already much has been made of the cabinet story, and as it has been referred to, let me mention the facts without the fiction. Two parties named in this correspondence called on me, and in course of conversation I said that some years ago, when looking at an old cabinet, the owner showed me a secret drawer in which he had found some old MSS. I bought the MSS. On another occasion one of these gentlemen asked why I had not reported the finding of the Burns MSS. in the cabinet. I at once stated that these were not Burns MSS., but merely old medical MSS. Yet, in the face of this, a very different light has been thrown on the cabinet story. The Burns MSS. I possessed had often been shown to gentlemen known to be authorities on Burns, and no one thought them to be other than genuine, even including those that so much has been made of.

I am now pleased, however, that the authorship of these has been discovered. The few Burns MSS. I had disposed of have been secured by me, so that no one will be permitted to suffer loss at my hand. As for the remainder, I have dealt with them as such documents deserve to be treated, so that in future no one will be troubled with them. It is matter for much regret that those who have made this exposure did not do so long ago. Admittedly they had the means for so doing in their possession, and it would have prevented much that can only be now regretted.

As I formerly stated, it is only recently that I believed any spurious Burns MSS. existed. I had heard of adverse opinions of London experts; but the *Times* case and the alleged letters of Parnell—so confidently stated by the British Museum authorities to be genuine, when they were actual forgeries—caused me to discount their opinion. Even on the case in point, one of these has gone the length of stating these forgeries "may have been done fifty years ago." Fortunately, after all, few persons have had experience of forgeries like the present, and if the highest professional experts have erred so much in their judgment, surely an amateur might have been spared the scathing criticism and imputation of worse motives, especially as he has had to pay for his experience.—I am, &c. JAMES MACKENZIE.

Public Library, Edinburgh, December 3, 1892.

SIR,—Referring to a paragraph in your London correspondence of Saturday, permit me to say that I have a letter from Dr Maunde Thompson, the principal librarian of the British Museum, at one time keeper of the MSS. Department, that the officials do not give opinions upon documents sent them by private individuals, but that he (Dr Thompson) will examine and report upon any MSS. of Burns or others referred to in the *Dispatch* articles if there is concerted action by those concerned in exposing fraud where such exists and it will give me pleasure to send up for examination any MSS. entrusted to me for that purpose. All documents will be carefully returned to their owners after they are returned from London.—I am, &c. HEW MORRISON.





## Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.

EDINBURGH, MONDAY, December 5, 1892.

IN connection with the MSS. forgeries, Mr James Mackenzie has a curious confession in the *Scotsman* to-day.

He admits that he was duped, but denies the accuracy of Mr Angus' and Mr Colvill-Scott's statement about the cabinet.

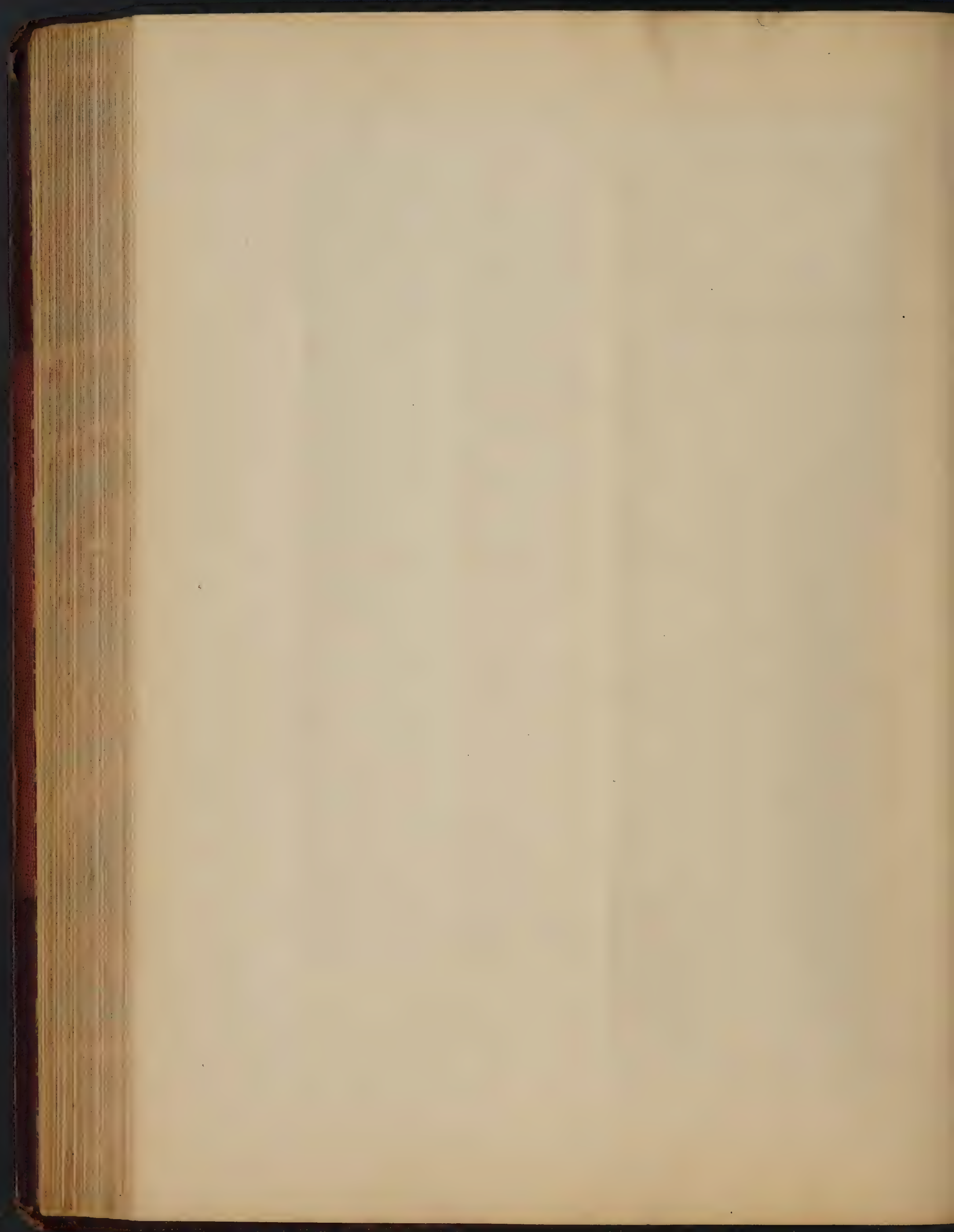
He also asserts that our allegations were sensational and untrue, and complains that we did not go to him in the first instance.

We publish an interesting communication from Mr Burns-Begg of Kinross.

CONFESSION to be of good to the reputation, as to the soul, ought to be thorough, sincere, generous, and unequivocal. We do not think that the confession of Mr James Mackenzie, published in the *Scotsman* this morning, answers to any of these conditions. It is not thorough, inasmuch as it scarcely touches even the fringe of the subject, and conveys nothing but the admission that the infallible Mr Mackenzie has been duped, if not wronged. Its sincerity we question, since it gives no proof of a desire to throw a ray of light upon the painful business. It is not generous, for it brings unworthy accusations against gentlemen—for Mr Craibe Angus and Mr Colvill-Scott are aimed at—who have laboured hard and spent much in the difficult task of convincing "collectors" like Mr Mackenzie. And finally, its lack of clearness and frankness is borne on its whole face; it is not the confession of a man who heartily welcomes the disclosure of the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; for Mr Mackenzie tells just as little as he possibly can, and, if we are to understand from the vague wording of his letter that he has destroyed the forged MSS. in his possession, then greatly as his judgment erred before, it has surely erred much more grievously now. "The few Burns MSS. I had disposed of have been secured by me," says Mr Mackenzie, "so that no one will be permitted to suffer loss at my hand. As for the remainder, I have dealt with them as such documents deserve to be treated." Everybody knows how such documents deserve ultimately to be treated, but though the apparent meaning is that Mr Mackenzie has destroyed them, it seems incredible that, in present circumstances, and until the whole conspiracy has been unearthed and laid bare, they should be destroyed, seeing that their testimony would be so valuable. Possibly in adopting this view we are doing Mr Mackenzie an injustice, which is foreign to our intention, but if we do so, it is Mr Mackenzie's own lack of lucidity that is to blame. Could he not have said plainly what he had done with them? This, however, is not Mr Mackenzie's way, as we can tell from experience; for in the course of an interview of nearly an hour's duration with a member of the staff of this journal, on the

morning after the publication of the first article on the Forgeries, Mr Mackenzie spoke several columns (of which we possess a shorthand note) without conveying any real information on the subject. He certainly did convey the impression that he had these MSS. for many years, and that they had been procured in Dumfries, and this suggestion he has conveyed to others. So far as we know from his letter published to-day, there is nothing incompatible with this suggestion; for Mr Mackenzie, for reasons known only to himself, says nothing about the source or sources whence he procured his spurious paper. Surely in the circumstances the omission is a remarkable one. Mr Mackenzie's contention at the interview was that the matter was a private one. Does he still adhere to this view, and deny that there is any call upon him to vindicate his own honour, and give satisfaction to an offended public?

Mr Mackenzie has, of course, nothing good to say either of the two gentlemen who initiated the exposures, or of ourselves, who gave publicity to them. He directly challenges the veracity of Mr Craibe Angus and Mr Colvill-Scott in reference to the cabinet and the discovery of MSS. These gentlemen are well able to take care of themselves, and their testimony may be allowed to stand against that of Mr James Mackenzie. In order that their statements may be compared with that of Mr Mackenzie in his letter to-day, we reproduce them in another column. Mr Angus, it will be observed, states that on the occasion of the second visit Mr Mackenzie denied or modified his original statement. "His ideas seemed to flit like the objects in a kaleidoscope." It will also be observed that the discovery formed the subject of considerable discussion, and the visitors made various suggestions about it, which conversation and suggestions are wholly incompatible with Mr Mackenzie's present allegation that the MSS. in question were "old medical," and not "Burns" MSS. Of course, the public must be left to judge between the two versions. Mr Mackenzie further expresses "much regret that those who have made this exposure did not do so long ago. Admittedly they had the means for so doing in their possession, and it would have prevented much that can only be now regretted." And in this connection he complains that we did not consult him before appealing to the public. "Had I been consulted at first," he says, "before so offensive





statements were published, I would have rendered any assistance in my power to trace the forger." To take the latter statement first. We were fully aware of the determined attitude taken up by Mr Mackenzie both in the Cumnock correspondence and at the interviews in Forrest Road, and our experience on calling on Mr Stillie and Mr Brown (Bristo), in the course of our original inquiries, did not dispose us to court any further rebuffs even in a good cause. We may, however, say that we fully tested Mr Mackenzie's sincerity before the second article was published. So far from desiring to publish anything "sensational" on the subject, we offered before the second article was published not to publish another line, save the conclusion of the Cumnock correspondence, which we had promised, provided Mr Mackenzie agreed to submit his MSS., failing the British Museum, to a committee of experts to be chosen on his side, by, say Mr Stillie, and on the other by a nominee to be agreed upon. This appeared to us as reasonable and fair, but it was rejected by Mr Mackenzie. This being the case, we take leave to doubt whether our intervention in the case privately would have been of the slightest avail, and we preferred to do what we did in the light of day and in the knowledge of the public, and the fact that this course has within a few days dragged a confession, paltry and tardy though it be, from Mr Mackenzie is our justification. We regret his ungenerous insinuations against Mr Angus and Mr Colvill-Scott, to whose unselfish labours the public are greatly indebted. To our knowledge they did all that men could do in season and out of season to bring home conviction to the misguided men who were engaged in palming off Smith's forgeries upon every one who would buy, but all in vain, and when Mr Mackenzie insinuates that they had forgeries in *their* possession, he ought to have known that they borrowed these forged documents from gentlemen who recognised them to be forged, and that these were procured for the sole purpose of convincing Mr Mackenzie. There are many other reasons why we must pronounce Mr Mackenzie's confession about as unsatisfactory as it is possible for a confession to be. What, for example, of the "Solemn League and Covenant" which he says he got from an old lady in Fife? Is it or the other copy still in his possession? Mr Mackenzie himself has assured us that there is still much to be told. It is quite true, but he is a most unconscionable time in the telling of it.





## THE MSS. FRAUDS.

### EXPLANATION BY MR MACKENZIE.

The following letter from Mr James Mackenzie, chemist, Forrest Road, appears in this morning's *Scotsman* :—

December 3, 1892.

SIR,—Your notice in to-day's paper of the spurious Burns MSS., with which my name has been associated as one of those who have been, unfortunately, taken in, calls for some remarks. Personally, I am glad the truth has come to light, however unpleasant it may be. Of late statements of fact have been so much mixed with what was sensational and untrue, that I have refrained from taking any notice of the matter. Had I been consulted at first, before so offensive statements were published, I would have rendered any assistance in my power to trace the forger; but now there remains nothing to be said by me that has not been published. Already much has been made of the cabinet story, and as it has been referred to, let me mention the facts without the fiction. Two parties named in this correspondence called on me, and in course of conversation I said that some years ago, when looking at an old cabinet, the owner showed me a secret drawer in which he had found some old MSS. I bought the MSS. On another occasion one of these gentlemen asked why I had not reported the finding of the Burns MSS. in the cabinet. I at once stated that these were not Burns MSS., but merely old medical MSS. Yet, in the face of this, a very different light has been thrown on the cabinet story. The Burns MSS. I possessed had often been shown to gentlemen known to be authorities on Burns, and no one thought them to be other than genuine, even including those that so much has been made of. I am now pleased, however, that the authorship of these has been discovered. The few Burns MSS. I had disposed of have been secured by me, so that no one will be permitted to suffer loss at my hand. As for the remainder, I have dealt with them as such documents deserve to be treated, so that in future no one will be troubled with them. It is matter for much regret that those who have made this exposure did not do so long ago. Admittedly they had the means for so doing in their possession, and it would have prevented much that can only be now regretted.

As I formerly stated, it is only recently that I believed any spurious Burns MSS. existed. I had heard of adverse opinions of London experts; but the *Times* case and the alleged letters of Parnell—so confidently stated by the British Museum authorities to be genuine, when they were actual forgeries—caused me to discount their opinion. Even on the case in point, one of these has gone the length of stating these forgeries "may have been done fifty years ago." Fortunately, after all, few persons have had experience of forgeries like the present, and if the highest professional experts have erred so much in their judgment, surely an amateur might have been spared the scathing criticism and imputation of worse motives, especially as he has had to pay for his experience.—I am, &c.

JAMES MACKENZIE.

## THE STORY OF THE ENCHANTED CABINET.

As the versions of Mr Craibe Angus and Mr Colvill-Scott are repudiated by Mr James Mackenzie, we reproduce them so that they can be compared with his narrative.

From Mr Craibe Angus' letter in *Dispatch*, November 28.

After much hesitation and haggling, he said the MSS. were at his house, and that he could not show them that day. We asked him to fix a day when we could see them, and he named the following Tuesday, thinking, possibly, that my friends, who were on a holiday, could not be present on the day named. I asked him no questions myself, but my friends did. He refused to tell where he got the MSS., or in whose possession they had been previous to their coming into his hands, further than to say that he was a "collector"—a collector of everything—a big order—and that an old cabinet, the style of which he did not like, had been brought to him, and that, thinking there might be some hid-away treasure in some secret drawer, he purchased it. And he told us how, on touching a spring, a bundle of MSS., as if by magic, were ejected from their long hiding.

On the question being raised whether, under the circumstances, the MSS. were his property or that of the late owner of the cabinet, and why he had not communicated the knowledge of his find to some learned society or the *Scotsman*, he beat about the bush and would not come to the point. He further told us that he had in a book an unpublished poem in the autograph of the poet which was gifted to him by one of the sons of Burns. On my remarking that such a gift was a show-book for ever, he said that the poem was rather "free," and that for that reason he could not show it. On his repeating the statement in one of his letters that he had not seen a spurious Burns MSS., and that he did not believe in their existence, we undertook to borrow examples—and show them to him on Tuesday, which we did. Mr Gibson could not be with us, but Mr Colvill-Scott and myself waited on him as arranged. We were late, having been detained in the borrowing of the spurious MSS., which two most respectable firms in Edinburgh, knowing our object, kindly placed at our disposal. We explained to Mr Mackenzie the cause of our being late for our appointment. He demurred to showing us the documents at that late hour, but he relented, and showed us the MSS. named in the *Express*, we showing him those we had borrowed. With the exception of one signature, which he thought doubtful, he seemed inclined to think the MSS. authentic. We were not so complimentary to those he showed us. Taking his statements as to the cabinet with the secret spring, and his denial or modification on the occasion of our second visit of the statements he made on our first, we were no wiser as to how he came by his boasted MSS. than if we had not conversed with him on the subject. His ideas seemed to fit like the objects in a kaleidoscope. If asked as to Mr Mackenzie's *bona fides*, I would be puzzled to answer, beyond saying that if he be the dupe of the forger, like a partridge or a lapwing dreading danger to its nest, he has the "talent of his weakness;" and if he be the accomplice of the forger, he is at least gifted with the "talent of his sin." Putting all the circumstances together, I doubt if Mr Mackenzie has in his possession a genuine MS. by Burns.





From Mr Colvill-Scott's letter in *Dispatch*,  
November 30.

On another occasion of calling on Mr Mackenzie at his shop, I heard from his own lips the following:—On asking him personally where he discovered his MSS., he gave me to understand that, being a kind of general collector of all sorts of things, from MSS. to candlesticks and furniture, he was shown one day a desk or cabinet, and on looking over it, naturally enough, previous to purchasing, he suddenly touched an invisible spring when lo! hey presto! out flew a drawer filled with MSS. of Burns, &c. Having drawn the attention of the owner to the fact, he decided to make an offer for the MSS., and purchased it; but told me, when closely pressed, that he did not buy the desk wherein this peculiar discovery was made, and which might be called the Enchanted Cabinet.

Here was a wonderful discovery of valuable MSS.—an historical fact in the annals of the literary world; and so struck was I at the time, that I proposed that Mr Mackenzie should furnish the Society of Antiquaries with the details of it in the form of a paper before them, or in some other way place the matter on record. But my proposal was sarcastically ridiculed! Why?

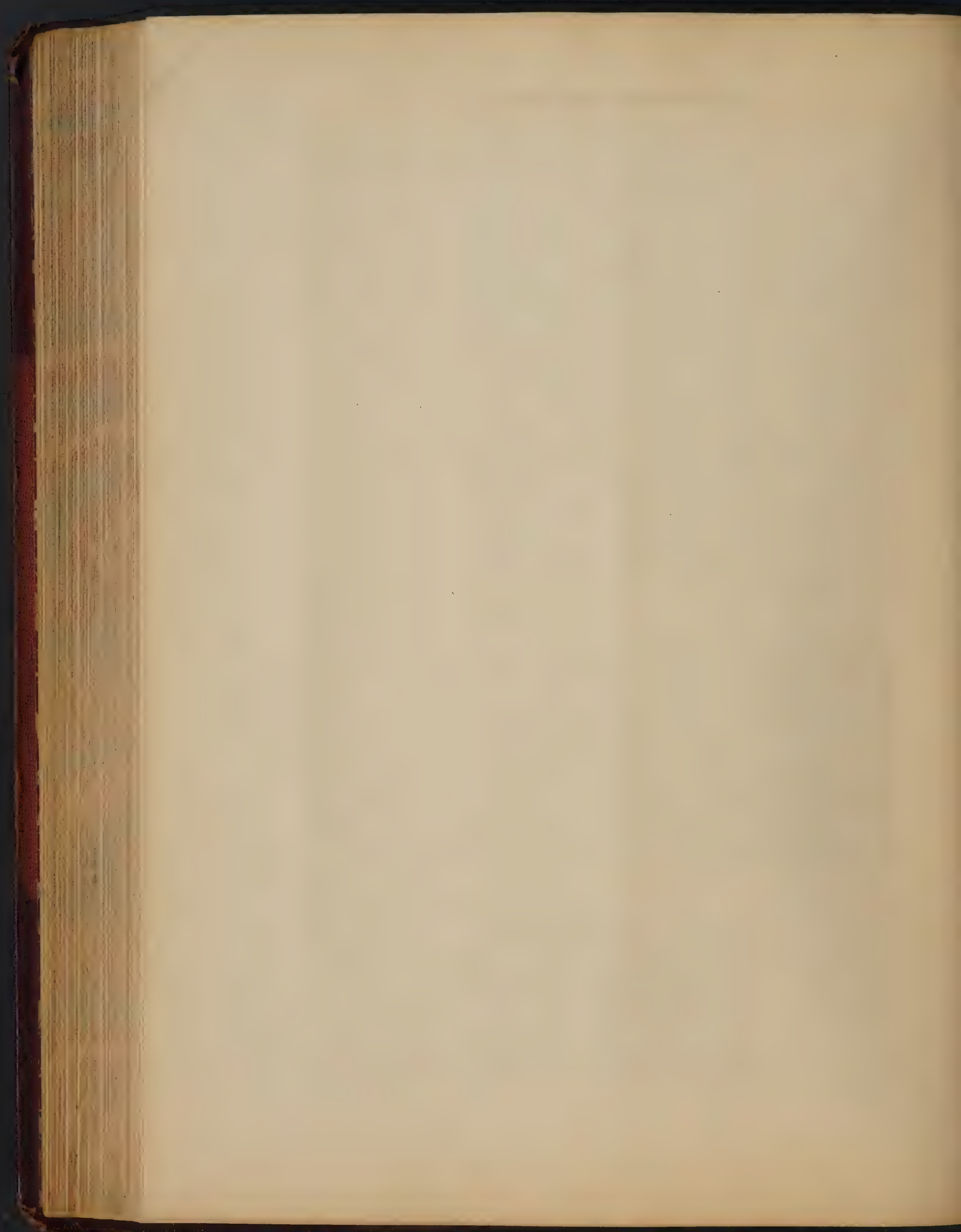
#### A NEW DEVELOPMENT.

WHEN all the details of the MSS. forgeries are laid bare, they will afford some of the most interesting reading that could well be imagined. Much has already been told, but every day some fresh revelation reaches us. On a recent occasion we made some reference to the fact that the forgeries did not stop at MSS., but that Smith had some complicity in passing off spurious paintings as the works of eminent artists. There now comes upon the scene an artist who is in a position to furnish some strange evidence about the disposal of mysterious dauls bearing the names of Sam. Bough, J. C. Wintour, J. Douglas, and R. B. Nisbet. This artist is one of the frequenters of the Hut at Annandale Street, and to his brush Smith was indebted for the interior decoration of his rustic retreat. \* panorama

#### THE GENUINE SIGNATURE OF THE FORGER.

Alexander Howland Smith (A. H. Smith)  
31 years Law-Agent,  
87 Brunswick Street July 1890

blending amusement with instruction being one of the fresco adornments of the place. This artist boasts a studio within easy distance of the Hut, and it has been no unusual circumstance for Smith and a few choice spirits there to congregate to spend an evening, having adjourned thither from Annandale Street. How Smith and the artist first became acquainted has not transpired, but it is highly probable the intimacy grew out of a chance encounter in a bar parlour. That, in fact, is the explanation which the artist himself gives, and there is no reason to doubt it.





As misfortune often finds us strange companions, so no doubt altered circumstances on the part of the artist brought him into contact with Smith. Anyhow they met, and became frequent visitors at one another's houses. In the course of their acquaintanceship, Smith one day came to the artist with a collection of water-colour drawings bearing the names of the painters mentioned—Wintour, Nisbet, Douglas, and Sam Bough—and asked his assistance in disposing of them. The artist took him to a second-hand dealer in town and opened negotiations. Smith, it appears, preferred to keep in the background and waited outside the shop until his friend effected the sale. Now it seems that the artist did not believe in the genuineness of the sketches—he has said so to several friends since these forgeries have come to light—and he stated his doubts to the dealer, who agreed that they were not genuine. Consequently the artist stepped outside to his friend Smith, and repeated what the dealer had said. Smith was indignant to learn that doubts had been cast on the genuineness of these works of art, and asserted that he had bought them in one of the Edinburgh sale-rooms, but his protestations were of no avail. How many sketches there were has not transpired, but it is certain there were several, and for the lot the dealer offered only a few shillings! This offer the artist conveyed outside to Smith, who accepted it, and the sketches were left in the hands of the dealer. Of this story the artist himself has for some days past been making no secret among his friends, and thus it has leaked out.

Of course it is not suggested for a moment that this artist was aware of the fact that Smith was engaged in the MSS. forgeries, but it must be admitted that in disposing of a Sam Bough sketch for a few shillings he was a party to a very simple-minded transaction. None know better than members of the profession the value of works by Sam Bough, of whom the story is sometimes told that he once declared that any simple and commonplace markings by him on a piece of paper were certain to fetch a good price. Now it would be interesting to know if these sketches are still in existence.

It is one of Smith's accomplishments that he can use the painter's brush to a limited extent, and he has done so in his friend's studio. One day when visiting there he observed that his friend was at work upon a picture, the subject of which was something after the style with which Corot has made us familiar—a mystic woodland scene, illumined by pale moonlight. Reference was made to the great artist's name while the picture was being examined, and to the fact that the subject was exactly like the style of thing he painted. Smith then offered to purchase the picture for £1, and to divide with his friend any profit he might make in its disposal. The picture, we believe, is not yet finished, and still remains in the studio. In light of the incident of the water-colour sketches the Corot transaction cannot help giving rise to strange surmises. Can it be possible that in addition to the MSS. manufactory there may have been a similar manufactory of old and modern masters? This same artist makes no secret of the fact that such things are done, and has been telling his companions of a case in which he found in a saleroom in Edinburgh one of his own pictures sold as having been executed by Robert McGregor. Not only so, but he can give the name of the collection in which it was sold.

In one of the letters which recently appeared in our columns it was suggested that this was "a case for Captain Henderson." If he takes it up the result will be the appearance of a number of names that have not yet been heard of in the case. There will be for instance an important witness who will be able to speak positively to the employment of tea for toning the paper—a person who it appears once lodged in the same house with Smith, and another of the visitors to the Hut at Annandale Street may be able to throw some light on the source of Smith's paper supply. Meanwhile Smith displays but little concern about the matter. Beyond reproaching his friends for divulging information, he is not disturbed by his notoriety, for he has not forsaken his accustomed public-house haunts.

It has been remarked upon as a curious thing that not one of the frequent visitors at Smith's Hut, of whom half a dozen or thereby might be named, has come forward frankly to state how much or how little he knows. This is unfortunate, too, for Smith's most

intimate associates may be supposed to know something of his doings, and their silence may be understood. There is, for instance, the person who assisted him to get his MSS. "planted," there is the friend who wondered why his fingers were always so discoloured (the effects of the tea), and there are others to whom Smith has practically confessed. He has admitted that he disposed of the MSS., but he believes that the forgeries cannot be brought home to him.

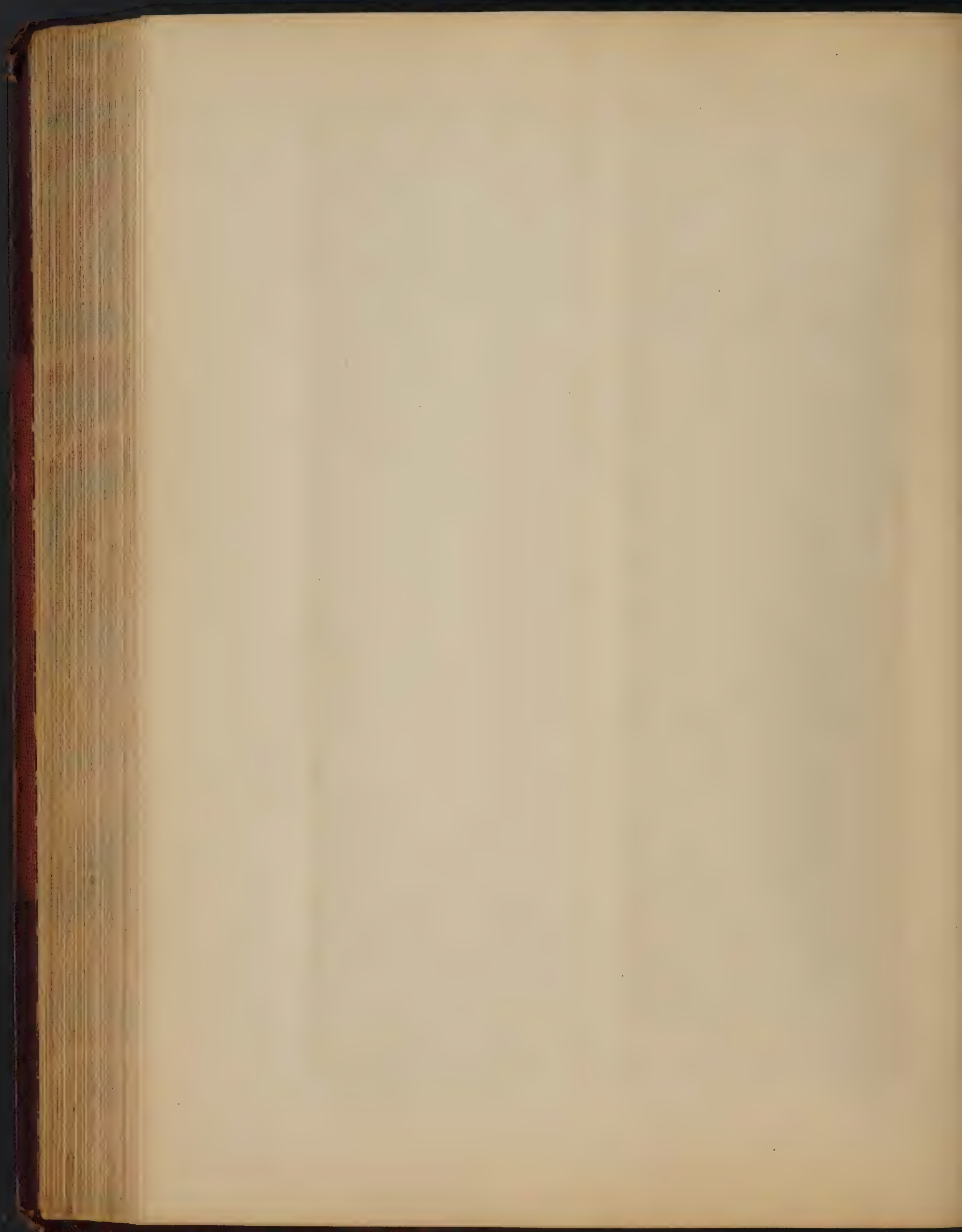
#### "ANTIQUÉ" SMITH AND MR FERRIER.

An interesting point has arisen as to the probability of "Antique" Smith's having really been asked to clear away any large quantity of papers from Mr Ferrier's office. It seems to be a fact that Smith for a time was on very friendly terms with the late Mr Ferrier, and it is possible that during that time the former may have been allowed a free hand among any old law papers. There came a time, however, when these relations were interrupted, and as this is an important fact in the case, it is essential to state it. Smith was charged before Sheriff Rutherford, in the Edinburgh Sheriff Court, on 18th June 1885, with theft. It was alleged (1) that he, having been in the employment of Thomas Henry Ferrier, W.S., as clerk, and having thus had facilities and opportunities of stealing cheques or other documents from Mr Ferrier's premises in Hope Street, without immediate detection, did on the 4th, 5th, or 6th of October 1884, in these premises, steal a cheque for £9, 2s. 1d., payable to Mr Ferrier, which he cashed and appropriated; and (2) that on a day between the 6th and 15th of October 1884, within the same premises, he stole a cheque for £7, payable to Mr Ferrier, which he also cashed and appropriated. Mr Daniel Turner, solicitor for the prisoner, objected to the relevancy of the complaint, but the Sheriff repelled the objections, and the prisoner pleaded not guilty. His trial was then fixed for 2d July. On that day Mr Thomas B. Gunn, advocate, defended the prisoner, who again pleaded not guilty. The witnesses examined for the prosecution were Mr Gasparo Nannetti, London; Mr Thomas Henry Ferrier, and Robert Lurie, junior, teller in the branch of the Royal Bank of Scotland at Hope Street. The witnesses examined in exculpation were Alexander Patrick Fraser, clerk to Mr Ferrier, and Detective-Inspector William McEwan. At the conclusion of the evidence the Procurator-Fiscal did not address the jury, but the prisoner's counsel did so, and the Sheriff then as usual summed up. The jury found the prisoner not guilty. He was therefore dismissed from the bar.

These were the circumstances, and the question arises, Would Mr Ferrier, after this case, be likely to resume such relations with Smith as to ask him or even permit him to make free with any of his treasures, especially as there is reason to believe that Mr Ferrier thought he could turn them to profit on his own account? This question is of great importance in view of the interesting account given by Mr MacGillivray, W.S. (Lindsay, Howe, & Co.), of his interview with "Bristo" Brown. Now, as we state above, the trial of Smith took place in June 1885, while the so-called "Argyll letters" were offered for sale in November 1887. Mr Brown told Mr MacGillivray "in the previous April that Smith came to him, and having represented to him the manner in which they came into his possession, he was induced to purchase them." Further, "he (Brown) stated that he afterwards called on Mr Ferrier, who gave him to understand that he would not interfere with Smith in disposing of the papers, and he (Ferrier) then gave him some old autographs himself." This would seem to indicate that Mr Ferrier was of a most forgiving disposition, for we are led to believe that after prosecuting Smith, Mr Ferrier permits him to take away business papers belonging either to the firm or to "old families," and to sell them to the public. It turns out, however, that the papers about which Mr Brown said he went to Mr Ferrier were bogus. Did he submit them to Mr Ferrier? Altogether there still remains much to be explained before the history of this mysterious transaction can be arrived at.

#### A COINCIDENCE.

A correspondent asks if the shop occupied by "Bristo" Brown does not stand on the site occupied by the offices of the Great Darien bubble company. We believe that it does not stand on the same site, but adjoins it.





# THE PRINCE CHARLIE PERMIT.

A literary correspondent, not an expert, writes to us:—

I have just had an opportunity of examining the Prince Charlie permit which was lately presented to the city. The ribbon which you sketched is not only new, but it has preserved the vellum under it from the "rubbing" which has served to give some look of age to the other parts of the document. As to the wax on the ribbon, it is wonderfully and suggestively bright, though the quantity is small. It is strange that a piece of vellum bearing signs of somewhat rough usage should not in the course of the years since 1745 have taken on that "tone" which one naturally looks for. As to the composition and form of the document, the heading runs "Regent of Scotland, England, &c.," whereas every one of the kind known to me puts England first. Then the ending of the heading has a curious mistake. The usual run was "And the Dominions thereunto belonging," but this has "therewith belonging." "Our Palace of Holyrood-House" is invariably given in the '45 proclamations, &c., but Schaw's Permit before us has "Our Court at Holyrood." In no case have I discovered that John Murray subscribed "given by his Royal Highness's command." The phrase went "by His Highness's command." The document is not above suspicion all over, but the signature of "Charles, P.R." is well imitated. From the specimens of "Smith's" writing given in the *Dispatch*, the writing of the permit does not seem to be his. Can there have been more forgers than one?

[This suggestion of our correspondent is not so improbable as it may seem. More than one person was concerned in the business, but how far Smith's accomplices assisted him in the caligraphic department remains to be seen.]

## A DISCLAIMER BY MR BURNS-BEGG.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

Kinross, December 3, 1892.

SIR,—I am very averse to intrude myself into this controversy, although I very heartily sympathise in your laudable and spirited effort to purify the literary atmosphere by exposing, in all its details, the existing traffic in spurious MSS. I am reluctantly compelled, however, to lay aside this aversion in consequence of my having been informed by Mr Craibe Angus, of Glasgow, that Mr Mackenzie, in an interview with Mr Angus, Mr Colvill-Scott, and Mr Gibson in Edinburgh recently, in regard to the "Rillbank Crescent Burns MSS.," had in a special manner quoted my name among those whom he had thoroughly satisfied as to the genuineness of these documents. This information was to me as surprising as it was painful. I had certainly noticed some time ago that Mr Mackenzie stated in his letter to the *Glasgow Express* in August last that the genuineness of the "John Hill" letter was fully vouched by the opinion of competent authorities, including a respected descendant of the author, but I failed to recognise myself under this flattering and inaccurate reference until Mr Angus enlightened me.

My slight acquaintanceship with Mr Mackenzie has extended over the last two or three years, and during that period we have had frequent discussions on antiquarian topics, as well as on Burns, both being subjects in which Mr Mackenzie, like myself, takes a very keen and lively interest. On two occasions at least, if not oftener, he kindly brought to my house a collection of MSS. which appeared to me to be of considerable historical and literary value and importance. He did not tell me how he had acquired them, but he seemed conscientiously to believe in their thorough genuineness. Naturally I was chiefly interested in the Burns MSS. (some of which were unpublished), and I examined these as carefully as the limited duration of our interview rendered possible. There was certainly nothing in the appearance of the MSS. to excite in my mind doubts of their genuineness; but although I am quite familiar with Burns' peculiarly striking handwriting, I did not feel that I was at all competent to form an opinion either favourable or the reverse, beyond regarding

them as undoubtedly cleverly executed imitations, if they were not genuine originals. I urged Mr Mackenzie to verify the documents by carefully tracing out their past history with the view of ascertaining the reason for their only now being brought to light; and as a reason for special caution, I mentioned that I had twice had to reject as "forgeries" alleged "Burns letters" which had been sent to me by post by unknown correspondents in the hope of my purchasing them. This, so far as I can now recollect, was all that transpired between Mr Mackenzie and me in regard to the genuineness or otherwise of his MSS., and I must say I am at a loss to imagine how my name should have been quoted as an authority either on the one side or the other.

I feel that I owe you an apology for trespassing at such length on your space in regard to a point of such very minor importance to the investigation of which you have undertaken.—I am, &c.

RO. BURNS-BEGG.

## A HINT TO COLLECTORS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

34 Frederick Street,

Edinburgh, December 5, 1892.

SIR,—I have in my possession a few old letters, among which are two in the handwriting of Sir Walter Scott. One is a long letter to my grandfather (undated), signed Jedidiah Cleishbotham, an imperfect copy of which is to be found in one of the editions of the *Waverley Novels*. The other is addressed to the same from Castle Street, signed Sir Walter Scott. Both letters are uniform in size, 9½ inches by 8 inches, and have the following water-marks:—the one signed Jedidiah Cleishbotham water-marked Valleyfield, 1809; the other, D. & A. Cowan, 1817.

I give a list of letters which I have all written by contemporaries of Sir Walter Scott:—

- (1) Lord Wemyss and March, Gosford, March 8th, 1819, water-marked C. Wilmott, 1815.
- (2) Duke of Gordon, Gordon Castle, March 14, 1819, water-marked with lines across and J. Dickinson & Co., 1815.
- (3) Sir W. Forbes, Edinburgh, 10th March 1819, water-marked J. Dickinson, 1816.
- (4) Sir M. Shaw Stewart, Queen Street, March 22, 1819, water-marked J. Whatman, 1814.
- (5) Hon. C. Hope, Lord President, Granton, 9th March 1819, water-marked upright lines and John Dickinson & Co.
- (6) Lord Wemyss and March, Queen Street, April 1820, water-marked J. Whatman, Turkey Mill, 1819.
- (7) Lord Cockburn, 4 Charlotte Square, 11th June 1823, water-marked G. C. Co., 1823.

My object in troubling you with this letter is to inform collectors or any parties interested in this subject that I will be pleased to show these letters, and point out a perhaps trifling feature which is to be found on the paper of all mentioned in my list, and which may assist collectors in determining as to the genuineness of their MSS.—I am &c.

J. MACKAY.

## MORE PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

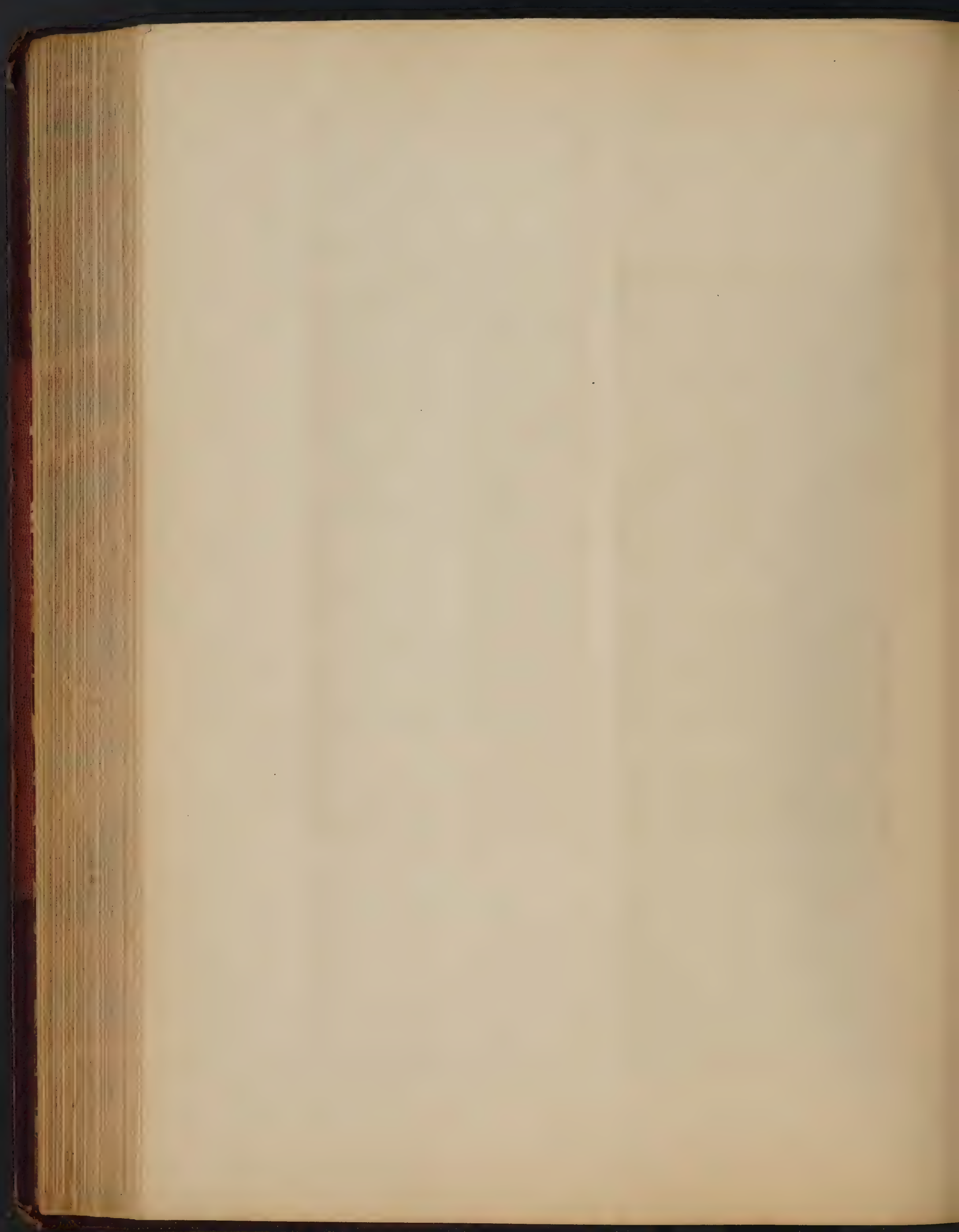
Edinburgh, December 5, 1892.

SIR,—The straightforward letter of Captain Moir Bryce does him credit, and also demonstrates clearly the dangerous nature of the forgeries. I trust that he and Mr Mackenzie will be careful not to destroy these curiosities, every one of which should be branded across, in indelible scarlet ink, "FORGERY, 1892," and handed over to the Advocates' Library to be bound up in volumes and placed in the pillory for all time coming. The fact that their falsity was not detected by "a searcher of records" and an "F.S.A. Scot." shows how cleverly the forger has done his nefarious work.

The sources from which they were obtained were understood to be trustworthy, and this explains the facility with which the forgeries were put into circulation.

If Messrs Stillie and "Bristo" Brown were duped they erred in good company, and now they should voluntarily submit the entire stocks of MSS. they hold for examination by competent men. Reparation of the injury already done should be attempted without delay, and I hope that steps to this most desirable end have already been taken. "Let bygones be bygones" cannot be permitted, and every effort should be made to withdraw the spurious documents. This is absolutely necessary for the protection of holders of genuine MSS., and for clearing the honour of Scotland from the discredit which the forgeries have done to her. *Verb. sap.*—I am, &c.

VIATOR.





## A BURNS INQUIRY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

December 3, 1892.

SIR,—May I ask if any of your readers could give me information regarding Collector John Mitchell, Dumfries, to whom Burns addressed the letters (September 1790 and 16th June 1791) printed in Paterson's edition of Burns' Works, Vol. V., pp. 328 and 384? I wish to know when he died, and where; whether his effects were sold, and if so, when and where; and whether any members of his family still survive, and if so, what is their address.—I am, &c.

J. M. G.

### "SCOTS WHA HAE."

We have been favoured with a copy of the following letter, the perusal of which will interest our readers, and help to remove from their mind any doubts which may have arisen as to the genuineness of this particular MS., which was purchased by Mr John S. Kennedy, of New York, from Mr Quaritch, of London, and presented to the Town Council here:—

26 Princes Street, Edinburgh,

December 3, 1892.

DEAR SIR,—I have now examined the Burns MS. of "Scots Wha Hae" in the Town Council Chambers as desired by you, and am happy to report that it is genuine and in all respects satisfactory.—Yours truly,

W. BROWN.

G. Auldjo Jamieson, Esq.

### MISS FERRIER AND MR BROWN.

The name of Miss Ferrier has been introduced by more than one of those who have been concerned in the discussions on the forged MSS. This is Miss Ferrier, 36 Thirlestane Road, sister of the W.S. whose papers proved such an inexhaustible mine to "Antique" Smith. Mr Brown, "Bristol," is one of those who have used Miss Ferrier's name in connection with certain books and papers said to have come from the collection of the late Mr Ferrier, W.S. Miss Ferrier, however, on being asked about it denies all knowledge of the matter, and in particular she denies having given Mr Brown any authority to use her name.

### SIR THOMAS CARMICHAEL THANKS HIS STARS.

Speaking at the presentation of bronzes to Selkirk Library on Saturday afternoon, Sir Thomas Carmichael remarked that, not being an author, he could not present his books to the Library, and when he bought books he wanted to stick to them. (Laughter.) He suggested he might some day give a Burns manuscript. (Laughter.) He was rather bitten at one

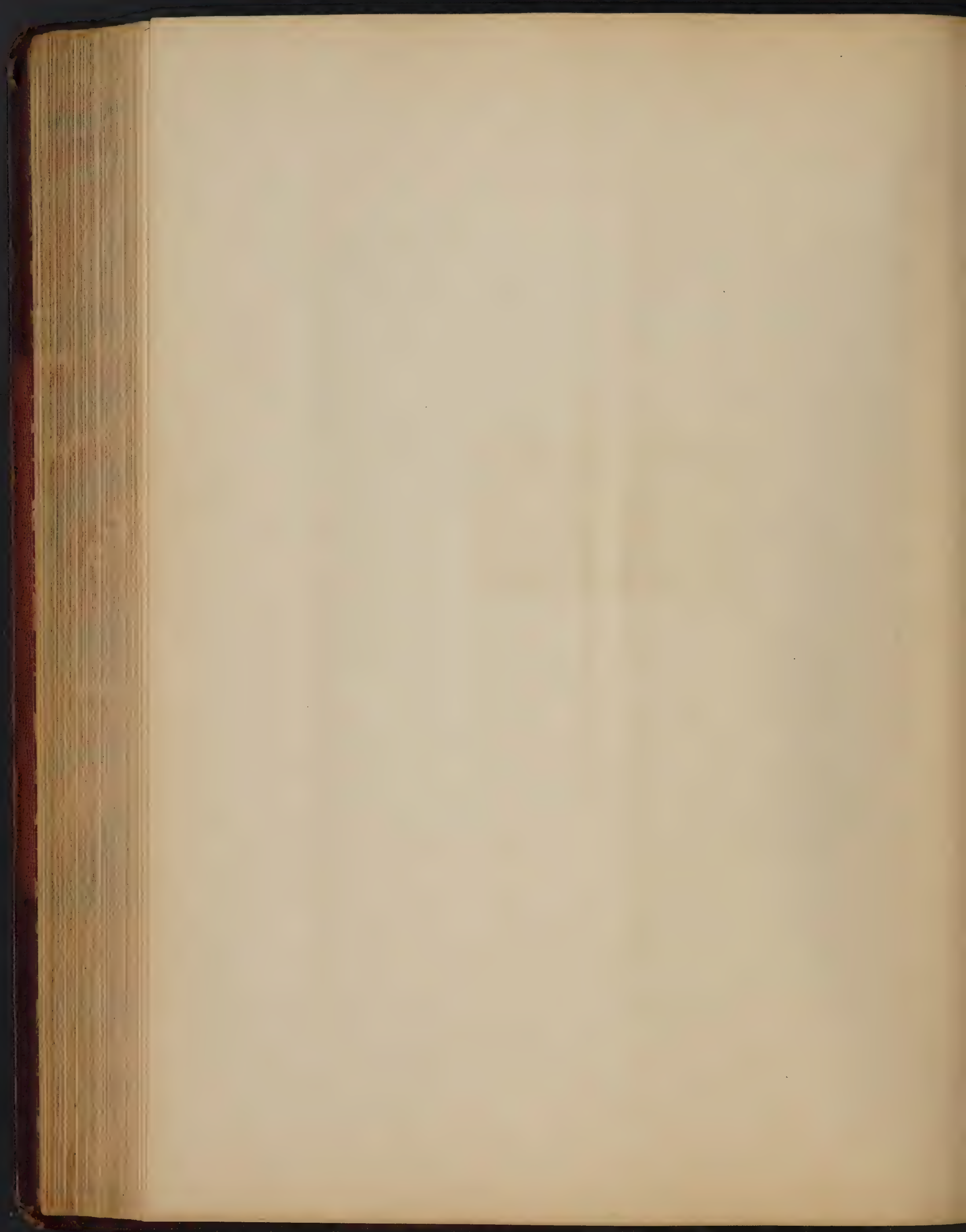
time in the idea, but recent events had caused him to think he had done well to leave that alone, as he was not an adept at that sort of thing.

### THE PRICE OF AUTOGRAPHS.

On Saturday Messrs Sotheby, Wilkinson, & Hodge concluded at their rooms, Wellington, Street, Strand, the sale of books and autographs from various private collections. For the autographs the best prices were as follows:—Letter of Robert Burns to Mrs Riddell, 5 gs.; letter of Sir Walter Scott to a lady accustomed to sing in public, £8, 10s.; letter of Sir Walter Scott to Ballantyne referring to his earliest productions, £7, 7s.; letter of Lord Nelson, dated the "Victory," off Toulon, 1803, £9, 12s. 6d. (Rawlings); letter of Lord Nelson, dated Naples, October 9th, 1798, to Earl Spencer, written shortly before the Battle of the Nile, £9, 5s. (Rawlings); letter of Lord Byron to Hodgson, relating to his first speech in the House of Lords, which he said was described by Sir F. Burdett as the best speech "by a Lord since the Lord knows when," £8, 10s.; unpublished letter by Lord Byron from Genoa to John Hunt with reference to "The Liberal," £9; letter of Adam Smith, Glasgow, 1760, to Strahan, his publisher, £9 (Pearson); autograph M.P. burlesque "Opinion," by Charles Dickens, signed J. Buzfuz, £8, 8s.; letter of Dr Samuel Johnson to Levett of Lichfield referring to business matters, £6; letter of Boswell to Strahan, his publisher, with regard to Dr Johnson's Journey, £6; letter of Thackeray to Chapman & Hall just before the publication of the "Irish Sketch Book," £6, 6s.; two autograph poems by Robert Burns, £12 each (Davey); another, written in Friars' Carse Hermitage, £11 (Pearson); an autograph letter of Burns to Mr Robert Ainslie, containing his avowal of his marriage with Jean Armour, £11 (Davey); thirty-six autograph letters of Robert Southey, the poet, to John May, £10, 15s. (Wise.)

### THE BRITISH MUSEUM EXPERTS.

Mr Hew Morrison, writing from the Public Library to to-day's *Scotsman*, says:—Referring to a paragraph in your London correspondence of Saturday, permit me to say that I have a letter from Dr Maunde Thompson, the principal librarian of the British Museum, at one time keeper of the MSS. Department, that the officials do not give opinions upon documents sent them by private individuals, but that he (Dr Thompson) will examine and report upon any MSS. of Burns or others referred to in the *Dispatch* articles if there is concerted action by those concerned in exposing fraud where such exists and it will give me pleasure to send up for examination any MSS. entrusted to me for that purpose. All documents will be carefully returned to their owners after they are returned from London.





## Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.

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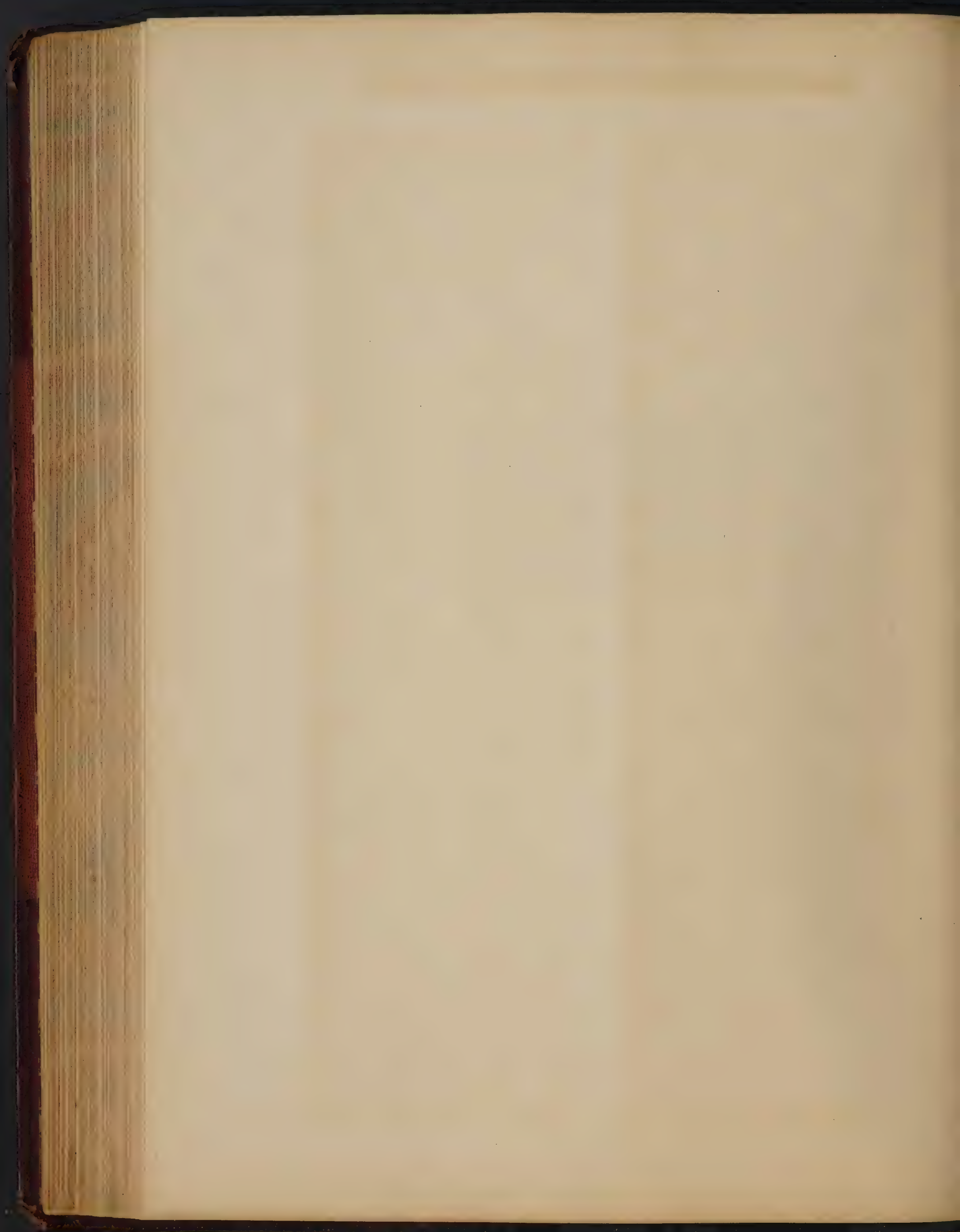
EDINBURGH, TUESDAY, December 6, 1892.

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"ANTIQUE" SMITH, on a charge of "uttering as genuine forged documents," was arrested by the Edinburgh police last night.

HE passed the bar of the Police Court this morning, and was formally remitted.

WE publish a queer explanation about what may be the origin of Mr Mackenzie's mysterious cabinet story.





THE MACKENZIE AND BRYCE  
CONFESSIONS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]
   
Edinburgh, December 5, 1892.

SIR,—Your paper of to-day contains a very curious and very lame confession by Mr Mackenzie as to his part in connection with the MSS. I associate Mr Mackenzie's name entirely with the dealer's part, and it is amusing to note with what meekness he disclaims being a dealer, saying that all the fuss about "forgeries" proceeded from interested "dealers," anxious to run down home goods. Mr Mackenzie's statements are as varied as they are weak and untrustworthy. He affirmed that he was a collector twenty-five years ago in Dumfries, and had ample means and knowledge to acquire such varieties. If so, where did he hide his treasures, which have only been brought out within the last six years?

In another statement he says he found a valuable collection of MSS. in an old cabinet, he or somebody else having by chance touched a secret spring. To-day he says he bought the MSS. from the owner, who showed him a secret drawer in which he found the MSS., chiefly medical papers. (Was "The Toothache" by Burns one of the papers?)

He pretends to give "the facts without the fiction." Let him then say where and when he bought this MSS. Let him also give the names (other than Mr Stillie's) of any gentlemen who gave him a favourable opinion of his Burns MSS.

I challenge Mr Mackenzie to prove that he has ever had a genuine Burns MS. in his possession as a collector. I challenge him also to prove that he has had any of the spurious MSS. for a longer period than five or six years, and I also ask him to give name and place as to where he got the copy of "The Solemn League and Covenant." Is this the spurious copy which he showed to the authorities of the Antiquarian Society (of which he is a member), along with another spurious document of the National Covenant? I ask him to produce the copy of Burns' "Scots Wha Hae" which he boasted having, or say what has been done with it. What of the "Toothache" poem which he had in his shop window, and since sold to a medical gentleman as genuine at a genuine price? What of the twenty and odd documents of which he sent a list to a well-known nobleman asking him to become a purchaser? What of the Mar documents he sold nearly six years ago to a well-known gentleman, that led to the "Argyll Papers" correspondence.

If Mr Mackenzie, F.S.A. Scot., is a genuine collector, why did he send to many parties in and out of Edinburgh requests to buy his goods, of which he had taken no means to test the genuineness?

I challenge Mr Mackenzie to disprove that he was an anxious buyer of any old Rebellion documents, Burns, and other MSS., &c.

Mr Mackenzie was very jocular in his letters to the *Cummock Express*; is he so still? He can give you columns of talk, meaning nothing, and write letters meaning as little. What understanding has any one as to his statement re those he sold; what extent does his statement go? Are the purchases at the Rillbank collection sale recouped? It is certainly a pity that Mr Mackenzie should so soon rush to destroy what it took him so long to collect without testing. He destroys what he has given no one the chance of seeing to be spurious.

Mr Bryce has made a small confession, but report has it that he has a large and interesting lot of MSS. Perhaps it is all right, and it is to be hoped he will not rush it to destruction like Mr Mackenzie. Mr Bryce is really a collector, and therefore deserves sympathy, and should give help.—I am, &c.

COILA.

THE MSS. FORGERIES.

ARREST OF "ANTIQUE" SMITH.

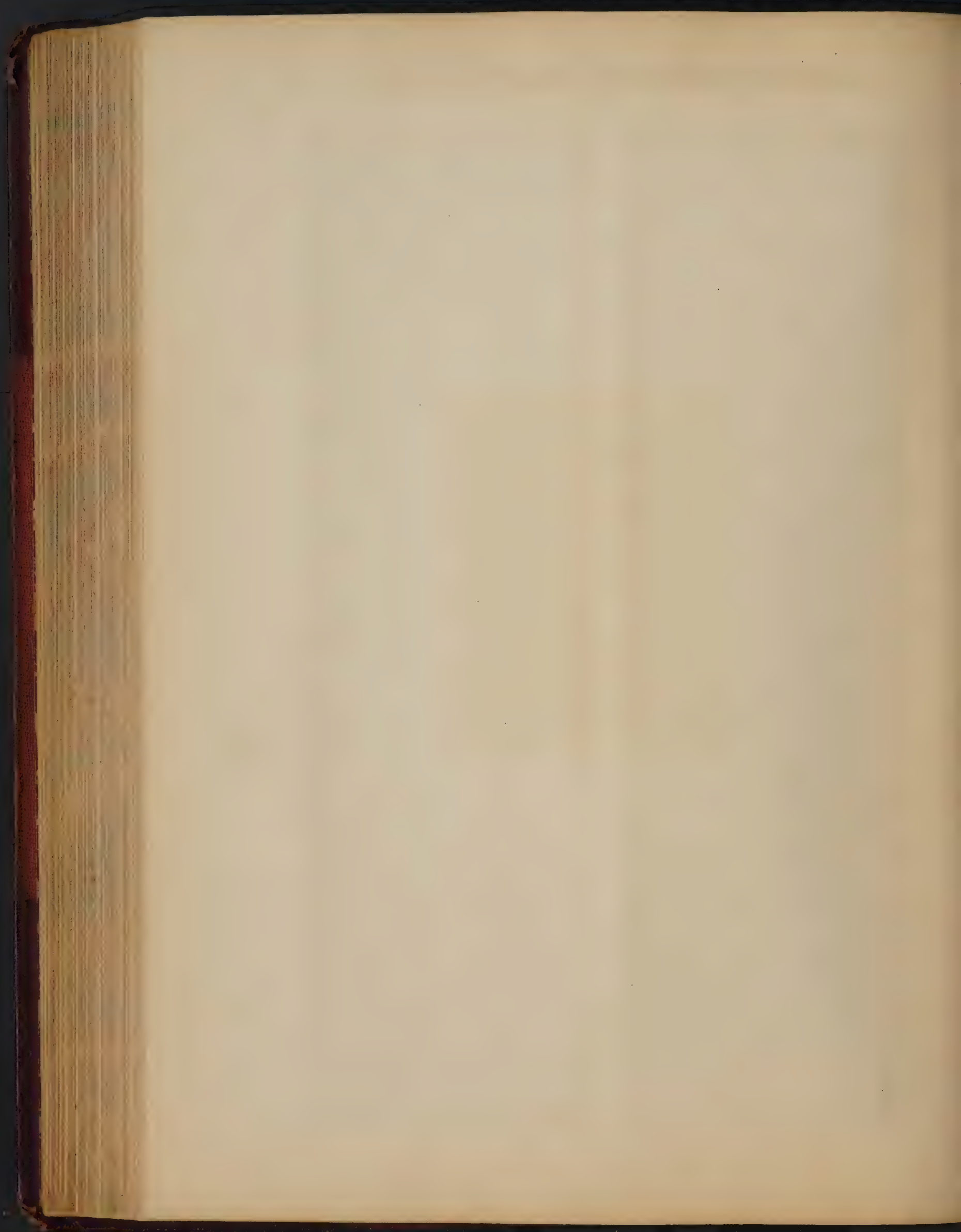
ALEXANDER HOWLAND SMITH, who has become known as "Antique" Smith, was arrested last night in connection with the MSS. forgeries. The police have been diligently engaged on the case for some time, and about half-past seven last evening he was arrested on a Magistrate's warrant. The arrest was effected in Rose Street by Superintendent Bain, accompanied by Detectives Frew and James Clark.

IN THE POLICE COURT.

Punctually at ten o'clock this morning Smith passed the bar of the City Police Court. His appearance was a mere momentary affair, the Clerk simply intimating that he was to be remitted for forgery, and Bailie M'Donald replying "Remit," with the result that the prisoner at once passed out of Court again. Smith is a pleasant-looking man of ordinary height and somewhat sallow complexion, quietly dressed in black topcoat and slightly worn suit, also of dark material. Altogether it seemed that the portrait in the *Dispatch* on Saturday was a capital likeness. This morning he appeared quite unconcerned. The police scroll shows that he is thirty-three years of age, a law clerk, resident at 87 Brunswick Street, and that he was apprehended at 7.30 yesterday evening by Superintendent Bain and Inspector Frew "on a Magistrate's warrant, charged with uttering as genuine forged documents." In the course of the day he will probably make a declaration to the Procurator-Fiscal—in private, of course—in answer to the charge. Shortly after leaving the Court he was visited in the cells by Mr Daniel Turner, solicitor.

THE MYSTERIOUS CABINET REVEALED.

We think we have at last got on the track of Mr Mackenzie's mysterious cabinet, which has figured so prominently in connection with this case. For the information we are indebted to a firm of dealers in antique furniture in town, who on reading Mr Mackenzie's explanatory letter in the *Dispatch* yesterday, thought they could trace a faint resemblance between the cabinet and the secret drawerful of medical MSS. and an incident which occurred between Mr Mackenzie and themselves five or six years ago. The firm had bought a bureau at a sale—a substantial matter-of-fact mahogany bureau, with drawers, of course, in plenty. On examining it, there was one inside drawer which would not yield to their attempts to open it. It had no secret spring, it was only stiff—very stiff. The resourceful cabinetmakers took the back off the bureau, and got at the drawer from behind. Their opinion of it was that it had got glued up in some way after it had been made, for the wood was quite fresh, while the other drawers from usage, were very dirty. There were several papers in "the drawer." These did not leap forth when the secret spring was touched, as we have shown there was no secret spring. The "medical MSS." consisted of three or four old household receipts—so far as the dealers can remember—and a gossiping letter from a doctor to a Lanarkshire gentleman relating to an interesting event about to occur in his family. The letter was dated about the middle of last century. The back of the cabinet was replaced on the bureau, the drawer was made to open in front, and in that condition the piece of furniture remained for some time in the shop. Several weeks after its conversion Mr Mackenzie happened to be in the shop and looked at the bureau. He was told about the drawer and its contents, and asked to see the papers. The dealers set no store by them, and Mr Mackenzie purchased the papers for 2s. or 2s. 6d. He never owned the bureau, and never asked to become its purchaser. This is the story of the mysterious cabinet. Or can there be two of them?

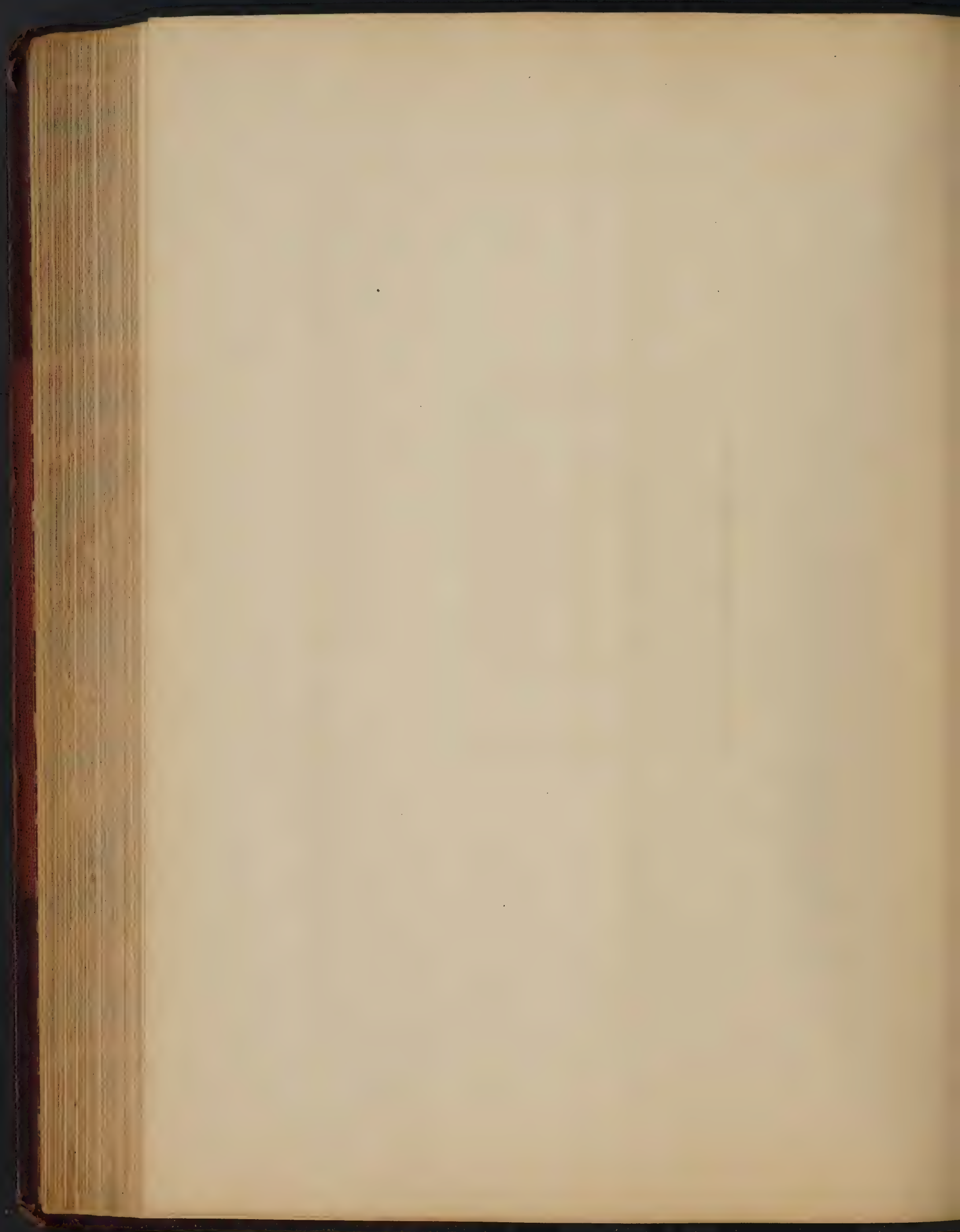




#### A LONDON COMMENT.

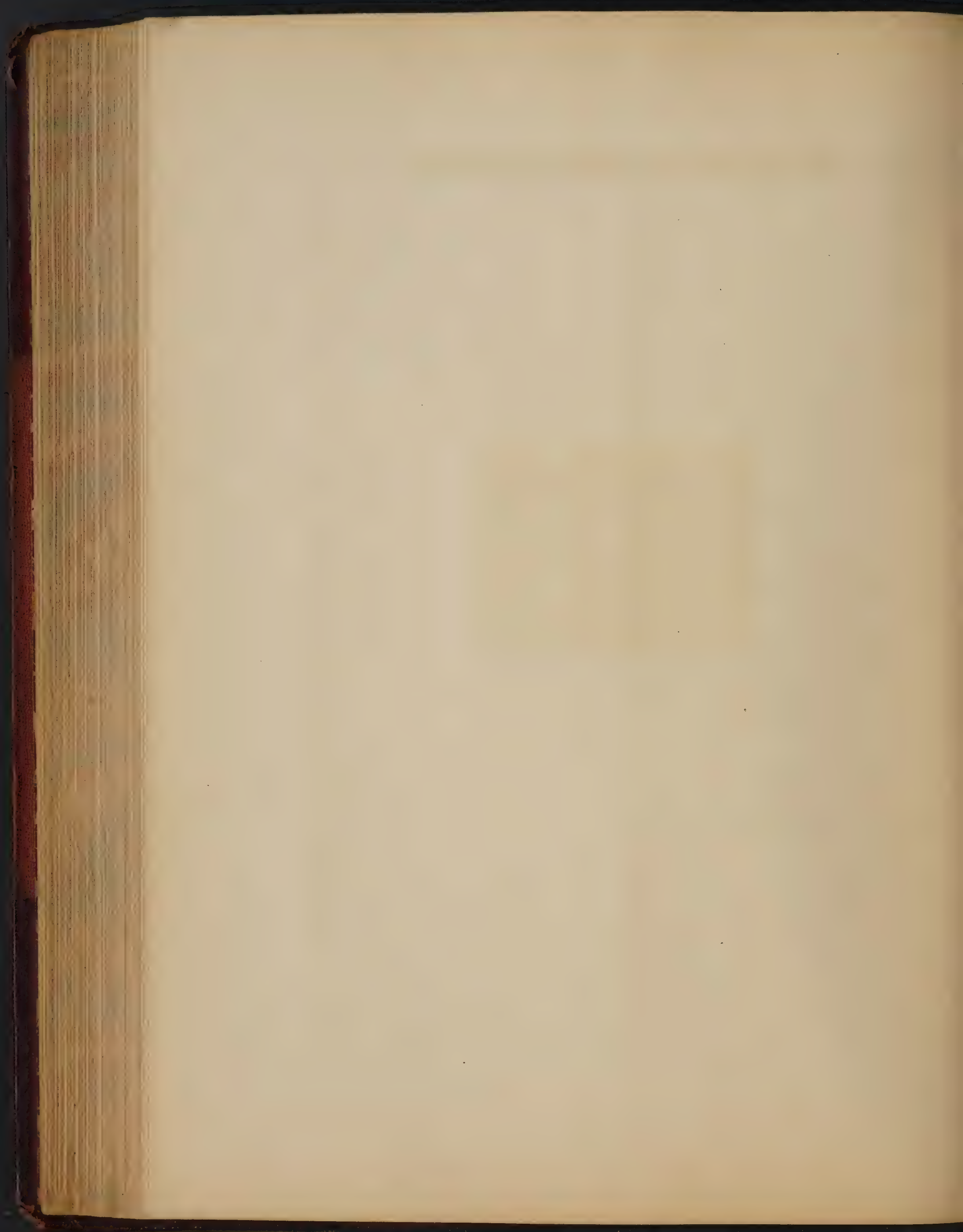
To-day's *Daily Telegraph* has the following:-  
 London, as the happy hunting ground of autograph collectors from all nations, cannot remain unaffected by the news that there has been discovered in Edinburgh a local industry exclusively devoted to the manufacture of famous documents, such as letters, and even poems, in the handwriting of Robert Burns, manuscripts of Sir Walter Scott, originals of the Solemn League and Covenant, and dispatches of Oliver Cromwell. For whatever species of autograph there was a demand the local industry promptly produced it and sold the wares at a marvellous profit. Manuscripts of all countries were manufactured with promptitude and dispatch, and probably had any one been willing to offer a sufficient sum for specimens of Ossian's handwriting, or for an account by the Thane of Cawdor of the battle of Dunsinane, it would have been duly forthcoming. They were supposed to have been in the possession of a firm of lawyers who had been agents for historical families in Scotland for generations. On the cessation of their agencies the documents were rejected as waste paper, but a clerk named Smith examined them and found them a veritable treasure-trove. Many booksellers and dealers were deceived by this story, as well as by the appearance of the articles, and find themselves now laden with spurious antiquities. Smith was yesterday arrested, and no doubt the whole mystery will soon be unravelled. The merit of unearthing this dubious local industry belongs to the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*."

This is absolutely untrue  
 the true author who unearthed this  
 mysterious man A. H. Smith were  
 Mr. J. B. Scott of London &  
 Mr. George Angus of Glasgow who  
 are the agents of Mr. A. R. R. the  
 London & the whole correspondence  
 are the Edinburgh Evening News



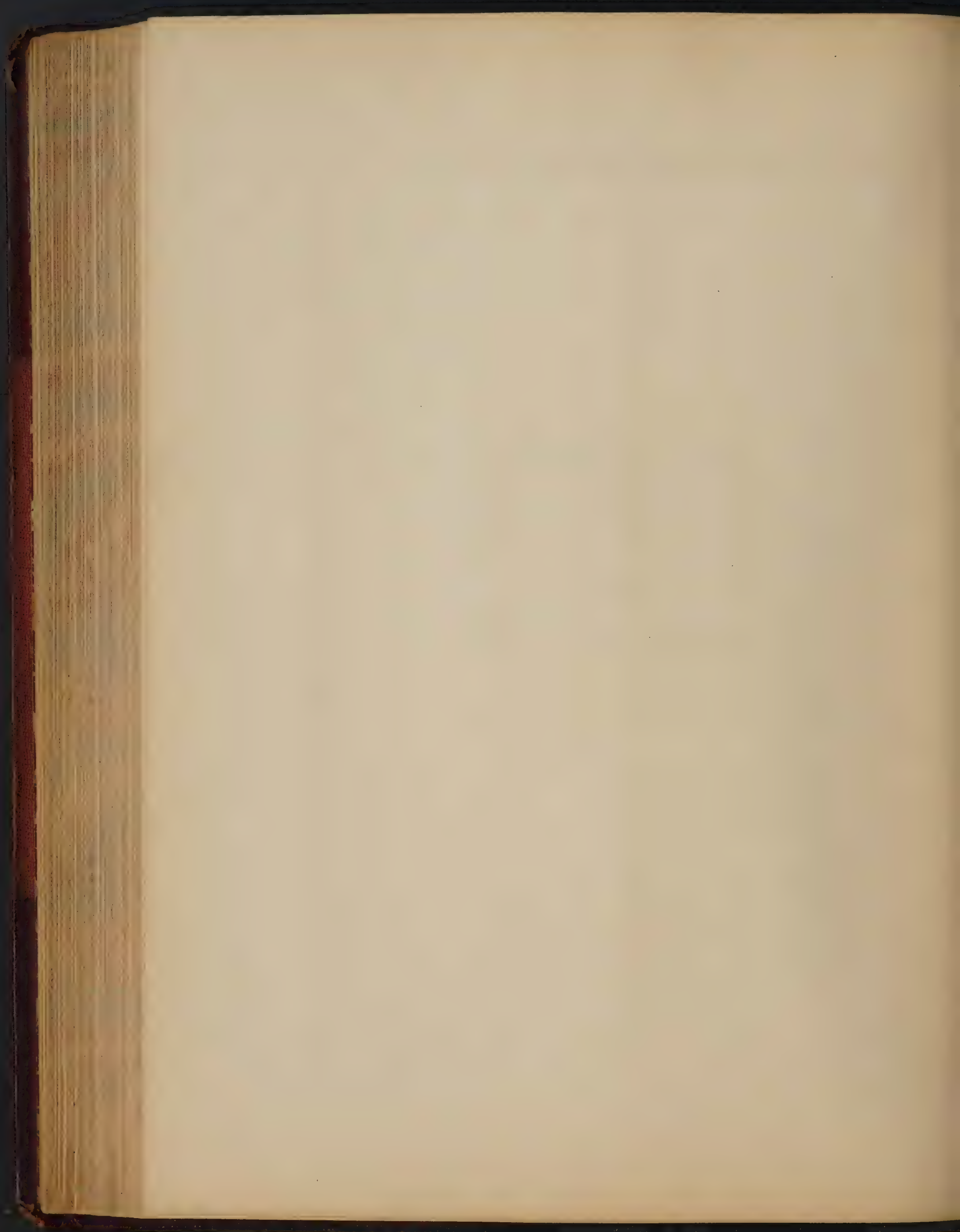


**ALLEGED FORGERY OF MANUSCRIPTS.**—Last night the Edinburgh police arrested, on a magistrate's warrant, Alexander Howland Smith, a lawyer's clerk, about 35 years of age, residing at 78, Brunswick-street, Edinburgh, on a charge of forging and uttering manuscripts said to be written by Burns, Scott, Macaulay, and other notabilities. For some time past it has been well known that a large quantity of spurious manuscripts have been offered for sale, and in many cases disposed of both in Edinburgh and London, and suspicion has alighted upon Smith as having been the forger of some of the documents. It is alleged that the prisoner, who was at one time in the employment of Mr. T. H. Ferrier, W. S. Edinburgh, obtained access to a number of ancient documents, and afterwards copied the signatures of Burns, Scott, and other celebrated authors, which he appended to spurious compositions. The accused will be brought before the Edinburgh Police-court this morning, and remitted to a higher court.



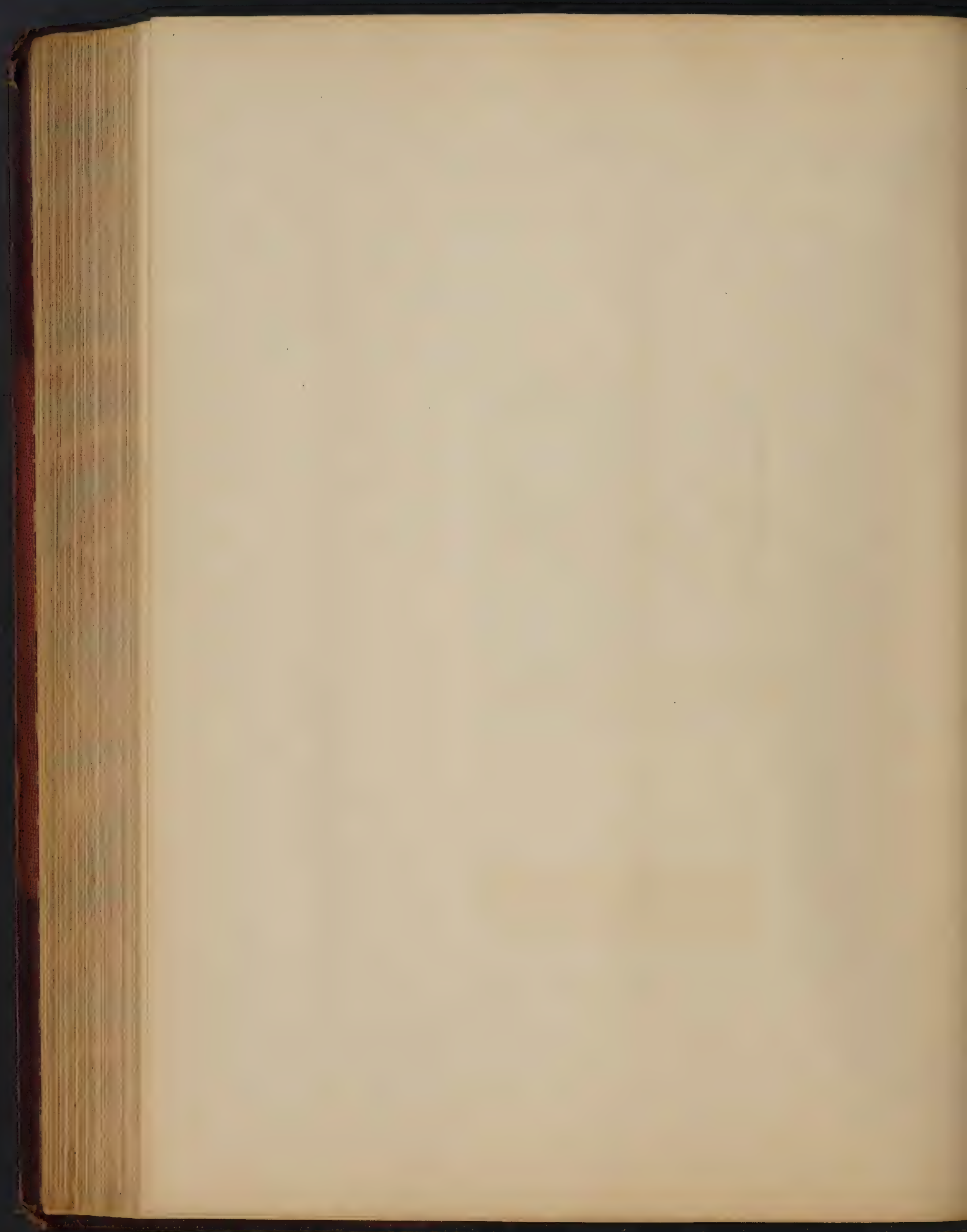


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London, as the happy hunting-ground of autograph collectors from all nations, cannot remain unaffected by the news that there has been discovered in Edinburgh a Local Industry exclusively devoted to the manufacture of famous documents, such as letters and even poems in the handwriting of Robert Burns, manuscripts of Sir Walter Scott, originals of the Solemn League and Covenant, and despatches of Oliver Cromwell. For whatever species of autograph there was a demand the Local Industry promptly produced it, and sold the wares at a marvellous profit. They were supposed to have been in the possession of lawyers who had been agents for historic families in Scotland for generations. On the cessation of their agencies the documents were rejected as waste-paper, but a clerk named Smith examined them and found them a veritable treasure-trove. Many booksellers and dealers were deceived by this story, as well as by the appearance of the articles, and find themselves now laden with spurious antiquities. Smith was yesterday arrested, and no doubt the whole mystery will soon be unravelled. The merit of unearthing this dubious local industry belongs to the Edinburgh "Evening Despatch."





THE DAILY TELEGRAPH, DECEMBER 7, 1892.

At Edinburgh City Police Court, yesterday, a man named Alexander Howland Smith, a clerk, was remitted to the Higher Court on an accusation of forgery. The charge relates to a series of imitations of the writings of Burns, Sir Walter Scott, and other literary men, which, it is alleged, the accused had offered for sale, and in many cases disposed of in Edinburgh and elsewhere.

THE SCOTSMAN, DECEMBER 7, 1892.

THE ALLEGED MANUSCRIPT FORGER.—The young man Smith, arrested on Monday evening, as already reported, passed the bar of the Edinburgh City Police Court yesterday. He was remitted to the Procurator-Fiscal (Mr Somerville), having been, it was set forth, "apprehended on a Magistrate's warrant, charged with uttering as genuine forged documents."





## THE MSS. FRAUDS.

AIR CRAIBE ANGUS AND MR MACKENZIE.

The following letter from Mr Craibe Angus, of Glasgow, appears in to-day's *Scotsman* :—

Glasgow, December 6, 1892.

SIR,—Mr Mackenzie has capitulated in an ignoble way, but he has not confessed. He has given us another turn of the kaleidoscope, but he has added nothing to our information. Confession, as I understand the term, would imply at least the recantation of his abusive tergiversations, and a statement of how he came by the forged MSS. This latter point has been insisted upon since the commencement of this correspondence, and we still await his answer. "Had I been consulted at first," says Mr Mackenzie, "before so offensive statements were published, I would have rendered any assistance in my power to trace the forger; but now there remains nothing to be said by me that has not been published." A plain answer to my first letter in the *Cummock Express* would have brought us together had Mr Mackenzie's object been to assist those whose endeavour it was to trace the forger and his accomplices. But instead of giving a plain answer, he hedged and dodged on the ground that he did not know who I was, although the editor informed him that I was the writer.

It is hard to believe that all has been published that Mr Mackenzie knows; but if it be, no thanks to him. Again, in his own delightful English, he says :—"Personally, I am glad the truth has come to light, however unpleasant it may be." No, no! The unpleasantness lies not in the "truth" itself, but in the withholding of the "truth," and till Mr Mackenzie realises this fact there will be no hope of his conversion. He continues :—"As I formerly stated, it is only recently that I believed any spurious Burns MSS. existed." This statement is contrary to the whole tenor of Mr Mackenzie's letter. He was innocent even of the sight of a spurious Burns MS., and the nearest approach he knew of to such was a *fac-simile* from a MS. that had been mistaken for an original. With the view of testing Mr Mackenzie's capacity of judging MSS., Mr Colvill-Scott and myself (as already stated) showed him one genuine MS. and several that were spurious, but we could get him to give no opinion regarding them. And his letter which followed our visit, asking the editor to close his columns against any reply to his aspersions, shows how far he had an open mind for the truth.

Here is another quotation which makes confusion worse confounded :—"The Burns MSS. I possessed had often been shown to gentlemen known to be authorities on Burns, and no one thought them to be other than genuine, even including those that so much has been made of. I am now pleased, however, that the authorship of these has been discovered." If words have a meaning, we are led to believe, not that some but all, of Mr Mackenzie's MSS. had often been shown to authorities on Burns, and that no one thought them other than genuine; and he is glad that their authorship has been discovered. But Mr Burns Begg, in his own quiet way, repudiates Mr Mackenzie's assertion that he gave any deliverance on the MSS. shown to him; and he even cautioned Mr Mackenzie as to the necessity of having them verified. Who the other authorities may be we are left to guess. Some of them may have a word to say on the subject. In particular, I should like to know—Mr Mackenzie having been discreetly silent on the subject—the difference between the character of the recent forgeries and those of five and twenty years ago. Mr Mackenzie gave us to understand that his MSS. had been gathered in Dumfries and elsewhere in the Land of Burns; that he revered them as household gods; and that a poem, written on the fly-leaf of a book, the gift of the poet's own son to himself, was among them. If Mr Mackenzie had shown this book, which, above all others he could have shown him would have been specially interesting to Mr Burns Begg, he surely would have had something to say in his letter to the *Dispatch* regarding it. If this book contains a bogus

MS., let it be produced for the purpose of the present inquiry. Whatever it may be, it would be useful by way of comparison. If an early forgery, it would have a character different from those that Mr Mackenzie has helped to bring into vogue, and if it contains a genuine MS., it would be helpful to those who seek to measure the difference between the handwriting of the poet and his imitator of to-day; and would it not be acceptable, "free" though it may be, to the Carnegie Library at Ayr, instead of the bogus MS.—the Bonnie Banks of Ayr—which he ostentatiously obtruded upon the "Auld Toun."

A word as to the secret drawer. If we had taken the precaution of having with us a ready writer, as had the editor of the *Dispatch* when Mr Mackenzie called upon him, we should have been safe from the aspersions that have been showered upon us. As to the story of the secret drawer, I am as certain as I am of any fact in my life. Mr Mackenzie said that when the cabinet was taken to him he did not like its build, but as it was curious, he set about examining it, and he told us how, on touching the spring, the long-hidden documents became, as it were, candidates for his protection. On the occasion of our second visit, Mr Colvill-Scott questioned Mr Mackenzie as to this happy experience, and we were both surprised at his qualification of his former statement as to the character of the MSS. that had, as if by magic, jumped into his possession. In the first instance, he gave us to understand that the spring of the cabinet put him in possession of poems and songs by Burns, but on our second visit he said that there were neither poems nor songs, but that there were letters by Burns; and he told us of another providential find which came to him at Kinross, the story of which is well known in book-shops where he has told it himself. The Kinross find has no reference to a cabinet, with or without a spring, but to a sackful of documents that somehow, providential again, no doubt, he had come to know were to be burned. The idea of making a bonfire of what might be, and probably was, veracious history in miniature was repugnant to his feelings; and he was proud to say that he had rescued a page for the future historian, come when he might. On such points his conversation recalled the triumphs of Dibdin and Henry Stevens, only they were greater; and he led us to understand that since his boyhood he had been on intimate terms with the leading members of the family of the poet. It is anything but agreeable to have to write thus; but in view of what has happened, plain speaking is the virtue of the hour.—I am, &c.

W. C. ANGUS.

### MR STILLIE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

SIR,—One word for Mr Stillie, one of the last remnants of a great literary age, a relic from "the Great Unknown of sixty years since." Scott and Burns have been his idols, and his weakness has been played upon in his age. No wonder that, with fast diminishing eyesight, he was imposed upon by these miserable fabrications, and no wonder that he refused to believe that it was possible for him to be mistaken. Let it pass. He was trusted by Sir Walter, and he kept the faith.—I am, &c.

G. M. W.

### THE PROPOSED BURNS CATALOGUE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

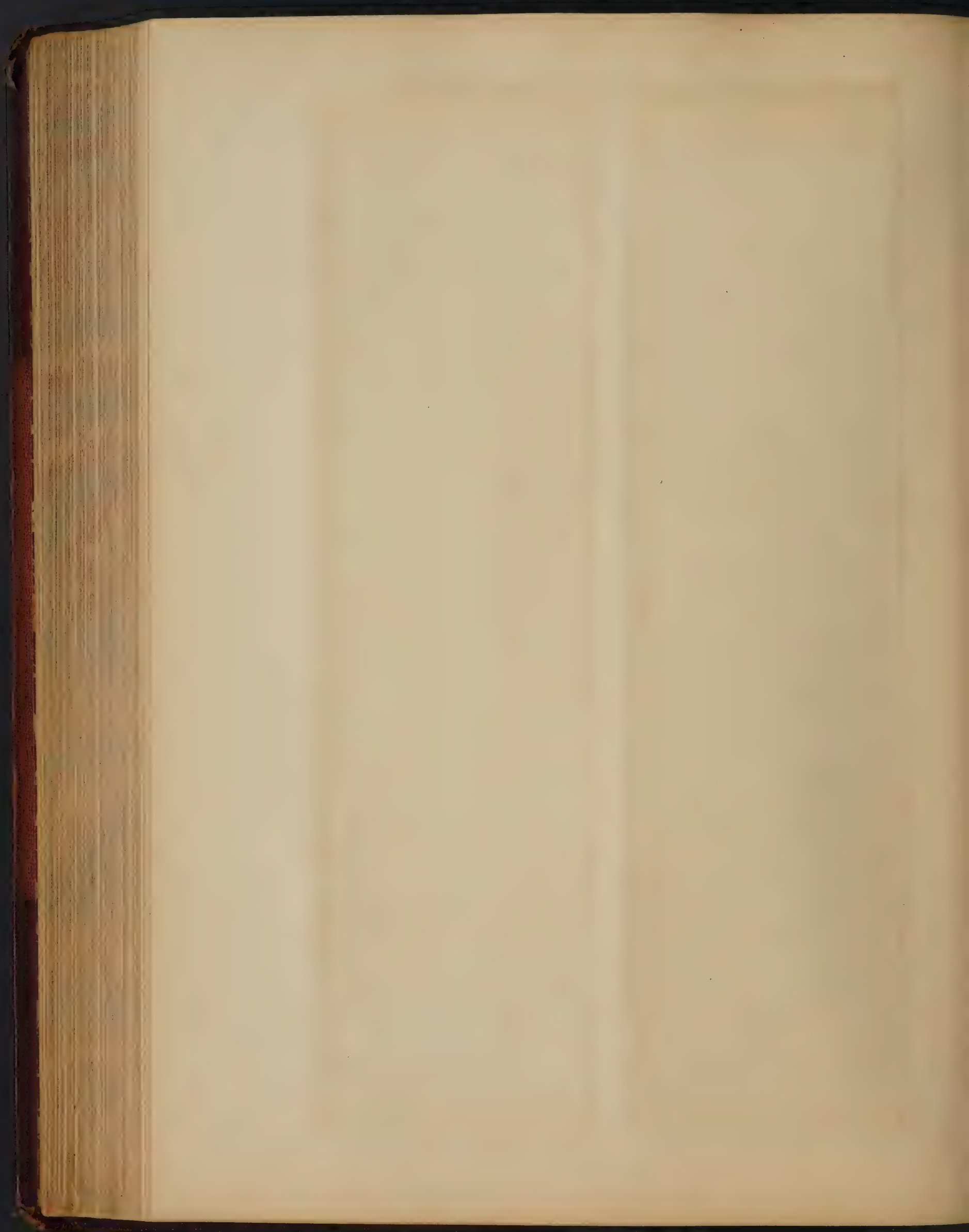
2 King Street, Kilmarnock, December 6, 1892.

SIR,—I notice in your issue of 2d inst., a reference to the "Burns Chronicle," for which I am acting as managing editor, and from which you make an extract from an advertisement published by Mr Stillie. I have not the slightest pretensions to be considered as an expert in manuscript matters, but I take an interest in everything relating to Burns, and I believe I was one of the first Scotsmen to offer to join the Society of Archivists.

I would like, if space permits—in view of the startling revelations you are making—to refer to the letter by "Viator," as it contains a suggestion I have long cherished in regard to the cataloguing of Burns MSS. With the purpose of getting up such a list, in issuing the prospectus for the forthcoming (Vol. II. 1893) "Chronicle," I wrote as follows :—

"Scriptography of Robert Burns, being notes relating to the various manuscripts of the poet. It is well known to most students of Burns—and a more tantalising piece of information could scarcely be con-







ceived—that several editors of our poet's works, beginning with Dr Currie and continued down to the present time, have not hesitated to alter his writings to meet the requirements of their own standard of excellence, or to cater to the public taste, invariably to the detriment of Burns' reputation both as a man and as a poet."

My purpose was to catalogue the known genuine Burns MSS. somewhat in a bibliographical plan, giving the title of the piece, if a poem, and the name of the person addressed, with the date, &c., if a letter; also, to give the history of the document, the price paid for it, date and place of purchase, present locale, &c., and to note the variations, if any, from the published writings of the poet. Such a catalogue would be most valuable, and in time it might be possible to publish a volume containing all the writings of Burns extant in MSS. *verbatim et literatim*, as written by the poet. To editors of Burns' works such a book would be an almost priceless acquisition, besides serving as a guide to collectors. Until the bibliography and palaeography of Burns are completed it is hopeless to expect a reliable life of Burns and an authoritative edition of his works.

I confess, however, with regret, that although my prospectus was sent to every Burns club and Scottish society in existence known to me, I have not received much encouragement.

Perhaps I ought to explain that in coining the word "scriptography," to designate the design I had in view, I thought it more expressive and more comprehensive than palaeography, which is the accepted term. It may be objected, of course, that "scriptography" is a hybrid compound.—I am, &c.

JOHN MUIR.

#### A MEANS OF DETECTING FRAUD.

BY ROBERT IRVINE, F.R.S.E., F.C.S.

[Reprinted from the *Journal of the Society of Chemical Industry*, December 31, 1887. No. 12, Vol. VI.]

It is well known that ordinary writing is easily removed when it is acted upon by bleaching agents. Advantage is taken of this fact by unscrupulous persons desirous of altering documents, cheques, and banknotes, for improper purposes; hence the number of fugitive inks and supposed untamperable papers in use to meet this difficulty.

A curious and interesting case of supposed fraud came under my notice in the form of a document, which was written upon the fly-leaf or second page of a sheet of legal paper; the margin of the first page containing the stamp, date, and water-mark of a will purporting to have been written about twenty years ago. The document or will was thus written upon paper bearing both on stamp and in water-mark a date which gave it the semblance of age. The appearance of the document gave rise to suspicion, and I was asked if it was possible to tell the age of the writing, and if the writing had been executed at one and the same time, and if so at what time?

This was, of course, impossible, as I was not allowed to treat the document itself; I had, therefore, to make experiments upon writings the dates of which I knew.

I selected writing one day, six months, twelve months, two years, six years, fourteen years, and twenty-two years old, and exposed these writings to the action of a very dilute solution of ordinary bleaching powder in water; the specific gravity was about 1001. In six minutes the newly-written matter had disappeared; in from nine to twelve minutes the writing of six months ago had disappeared; in twenty minutes the writing of two years had partly disappeared; in a like time the writing of six years ago was not greatly affected; fourteen years ago very slightly; and twenty-two years hardly affected at all (indeed, old writing seems hardly affected by such a weak solution, even after hours' exposure.)

Although I have only made use of a well-known process and materials to obtain the results I have indicated, still I think such a simple means of detection may act as a check to frauds which are becoming only too common. There was a most interesting paper read before the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester in the session of 1879 and 1880, by Mr W. Thomson, F.R.S.E., which I commend to the study of any one wishful to carry this investigation further than I have been able to do. In it the author gives many curious and interesting facts in connection with

the behaviour of writing inks under the influences of various chemical compounds.

#### A SPECIMEN OF "BURNS" SPURIOUS MSS.

ANOTHER IMPOSTURE DETECTED BY MR STRONACH.

In response to correspondents' suggestions, we give a specimen of some of the characteristics of the spurious Burns MSS. It is not to be understood that these manuscripts are all alike in their characteristics, but the one which we have selected is a fair example. It professes to be "An Ode from S— for Mr Johnson," and bears the signature—

*Robert Burns*

This signature is a transparent forgery. It lacks that delicate lightness of touch which is characteristic of Burns' hand. The "B" is simply a slightly exaggerated and clumsy form of the writer's natural hand, a better example of which may be seen in "By" printed below. The final "s," too, is not the "s" of Burns. Nor is the painfully drawn dash of uniform thickness—Burns' dash, as a rule, tapering gracefully at each extremity.

The "Ode" itself is in handwriting similar to the signature—thick and clumsy. A full *fac-simile* would have occupied too much space, and instead we print the "Ode" in full, and subjoin the first word in each line, so as to bring out the chief features, and thus allow a comparison to be made with some words selected from a genuine copy of "Scots Wha Hae" in Cunningham's Life. We give the Ode below. Before our first edition had been many minutes out our lynx-eyed correspondent, Mr Stronach, had it traced as one well-known to have been written by no less a celebrity than William Collins in 1746. It is as follows:—

How sleep the brave who sink to rest,  
By all their country's wishes blest!  
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,  
Returns to deck their hallowed mould,  
She there shall dress a sweeter sod  
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung,  
By forms unseen their knell is sung.  
Their honour comes, a pilgrim gray,  
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;  
And Freedom shall awhile repair  
To dwell a weeping hermit there.

Compare the false and the true example of the word "Ode":—

THE FALSE. THE TRUE.

*adm. Ode*

The "O" of the spurious example is clearly fraudulent. We now give the leading words in their order:—

*How Brave Men*

*Returns the Ode*

*By Ode*

*And Freedom*





In one case we have given "And Freedom" in order to enable a comparison to be made with Burns' genuine "F" as under—

Freedom's  
Three-man Hand  
Scots Throat  
The

It will be clear to any one that the "H" in "How," with its free upturned stroke, is unmistakably identical with the "H" as in a *fac-simile* signature which we published the other day. So too with the "S." The "W" in "When" is wholly unlike Burns'. As for the "F's" and "T's" they are preposterous, being evidently the product of a free sweeping modern hand. Other peculiarities might be noted, but these will suffice. We purpose giving one or two more specimens as occasion offers.

#### "300 ORIGINAL MSS."

When the London experts challenged Mr Stillie's Burns MSS., he issued a counter blast containing an innuendo against "English Papers and Catalogues." According to this document Mr Stillie had passed through his hands "upwards of 300 original MSS. of Burns." A list of the titles and purchasers' names would be interesting, but as this is a large order, we shall meantime be content if he will produce the document from which he took this *fac-simile* of Burns's signature. Notwithstanding the cocksureness of Mr Stillie, we have come to the conclusion that the *fac-simile* in the counter blast, which we give below, represents the doubting weakness of "Antique" Smith, and not the strength and certainty of the Poet's quill:—

ROBERT BURNS MANUSCRIPTS.

In respect from inquirers, especially from England and America, relative to the different opinions about Robert Burns' signature.

During my 64 years in the old book and manuscript trade, I have had the experience of having had in my possession upwards of 300 original manuscripts of Burns invariably signed.

In 1786 Burns adopted this signature—

Robt Burns

and I have never, in any one instance, found it altered. I have, however, noticed in some English papers and catalogues the poet's name *fac-similed* in full, "Robert Burns." I doubt if such are genuine.

JAMES STILLIE,

19 George Street, Edinburgh.

#### THE KENNEDY COLLECTION.

We have now before us a copy of the report of the directors of the Lenox Library, New York, for 1890. Mr John S. Kennedy, a wealthy banker of that city, is president of the directors, and with a munificence well worthy of the utmost commendation, he presented in the year mentioned a large collection of Burns MSS. and other documents to the library. Mr Kennedy, it is understood, purchased all, or nearly all, of these in

Scotland, and if they are genuine the Lenox Library is to be heartily congratulated upon the accession of such treasures.

No one for a single moment doubts Mr Kennedy's implicit belief in these MSS. when he acquired them, and we are led to understand that he made their genuineness a condition of purchase. Whether he will have them now submitted to experts is not for us to do more than suggest. A pronouncement of them as genuine by recognised authorities would go far to allay feelings of suspicion on this side of the water, for a cursory glance at the list has induced more than one reputed authority here to believe that there seemed to be recognisable among them some old friends of the auction rooms, to which we have made reference more than once in this matter.

Part of the collection made by Mr Kennedy was annotated by a citizen, and has already appeared in our pages, and we do not propose referring to these, but one or two points about the rest are worth noting.

Our first feeling is one of astonishment that at this period of the nineteenth century, when every person supposed that Burns relics had been garnished into one or other of our public institutions, or had been snatched up by private individuals to form part of collections more or less known to lovers of the national bard, such an extensive and valuable collection could be met in with at one place. Had Mr Kennedy's collection taken—even a wealthy man like himself—several years to form, it would square more with everybody's notions on the subject. But a big haul like this is quite enough of itself to arouse suspicion as to the genuineness of a few of them at least.

The second point to be noted is the all but universal endorsement of the documents by James Hogg. That Hogg examined many Burns MSS. cannot be doubted. But was this collection made before 1833? If so, why is there no mention by Hogg of the parties to whom many of the documents purport to have been sent?

There are no fewer than twenty-one of the songs sent to Miss Laurie. This of itself would have constituted Miss Laurie a respected friend of Burns, but in Scott Douglas's exhaustive edition no mention is made of such a lady. She may have been the daughter of either of two gentlemen friends of the poet, but this is unlikely, as Burns spelt their names Laurie. If the collection was made previous to 1833, Mr Stillie, from the knowledge which he would possess of the ownership of the collection, could have traced Mr Haig, to whom more than one of the pieces had been sent by his friend the poet. He (Mr Haig) was the reputed recipient of a document in 1785 when a lady is connected with the transaction. He was also the person through whom one of the songs was sent to Miss Laurie. And not only so, but Miss Haig, presumably his daughter, figures in the transaction. And, to crown all, or to complete Burns' biography of his friend Haig, he sends for his edification a song, "Gie him strong drink until he wink."

Another point worthy of notice is a characteristic of the poet disclosed by these documents which has not been emphasised, to say the least of it, by his editors and biographers. It is quite well known that Burns copied songs and ballads from books and magazines, either for his common-place book or for using as the foundation of his own effusions; but now it seems that he was in the habit—one might call it from a study of this list—of sending to his admirers and friends copies of such songs. While his friends would no doubt appreciate even favours of that kind, the poet's motive cannot be altogether seen through. It was as easy to write out one of his own songs, which would be certain to be received with double gratitude and feelings of greater regard than could be had for a copy of some other poet's work.

As striking a point as any in connection with the whole affair is the mention by title of the works from which the songs were copied. Can it be that even in this there is something more than appears? We have verses copied from books without titles. Besides a manufacture of Burns MSS. we have reason to believe





the same persons were engaged in manufacturing a library for him. It will probably be found, when more light is let in on these matters, that Burns was stated to be the owner of more books than his admirers hitherto fancied, and that among the "relics" were found volumes with "R. B." or "Robt. Burns" on their title-pages. This manufacture of a library one could fancy to be more lucrative and less dangerous than that of long clumsy documents. What easier than to pick up at Grant's stall a volume with a date suiting, and palm it off as a genuine book from the poet's library, with his autograph, either in the shape of his name or bearing a presentation inscription to Mr Maitland, Mr Haig, or Mr John Hill?

Mr Kennedy's donations to the Lenox Library take up pp. 15-27 of the report, and although the list and notes run to a greater length than we could in ordinary circumstances afford to devote to such a matter, its public importance, in view of our recent articles, has induced us to give it at length, and we commend a careful study of it to our readers apart from any question of genuineness.

#### HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS.

The Covenanters' Bond against attending Conventicles by William Purves and his Family, 5th July 1674.

Report as to state of the troops, &c., on his taking the command, signed Montrose, League of Durris, 25th January 1644.

James VII.—Letter to Lord Viscount Kilsyth, signed at Commercy (Comrie), 26th October 1715.

Prince Charles Edward—Proclamation for raising Troops, Perth, 10th September 1745. By his Royal Highness, Command George Murray, Hallrood House, September 1745.

Prince Charles Edward—Commission to Colonel George Buchanan in Dunbarton. Halyrude House, 25th October 1745. Countersigned by J. Murray.

Viscount Dundie, Graham of Claverhouse—Proclamation against Misaffected Noblemen and others. "The Leaguer, near Dundie, this 17 of January MDCXXXIX."

Viscount Dundie, Graham of Claverhouse—Order to the Town of Perth on supplies, March 18th, 1639. "The samens was ordered to be erased from the buiks of the Council."

General Dalrymple—Letter to the Earl of Balcarres, Camp, 22d November 1666, urging him to send reinforcements, as the Rebels (the Covenanters) were in great strength among the hills near Lanark.

Mary Queen of Scots—Warrant to James Chapman, printer in Edinburgh, to print an Edition of "Les Heures de Dieu" (Book of Hours or Prayer-Book.) Countersigned by the Regent Moray, January 1562 (French.)

Oliver Cromwell—Passport authorising Captain Robert Falconer to go with six men from Camp to York 10th September 1650. Countersigned by General George Monck.

Elizabeth R. Queen Elizabeth—Letter to Lord Moray. "From Windsor, this 15 of January 1575, Relative to 'the Prince'."

James VI.—Form of Prayer (French and Latin.) "Fras Falkland, Nox Novembris xx., MDCX." Prince Regent of Scotland.

Montrose—Order for the burning of Urrie Castle. Signed 16th December 1644.

Charles I.—Commission to Colonel George Loudon, directing to attend and serve David, Earl of Montrose. York, seventh of September MDCXL. Countersigned "By His Majesty's Command, Melfort."

James VI.—Letter to his Secretary, rebuking him for making the Privy Council aware of private matters between them.

Sir John Cope—Proclamation prohibiting assisting the Rebels, 26th August 1745, Stirling. Countersigned by Duncan Forbes (of Culloden), 26th August 1745.

Duke of Cumberland—Dispatch to the Provost, Bailies, and Council of Perth. To give up the names of all those who assisted the Rebels. Fort Augustus, 21st June 1746.

Maria R. Queen of Scots—Letter thanking some nobleman for his services. Signed, Stirling, August 1564.

Maria R. Queen of Scots—Letter warning the Privy Council to receive no letters as authentic that do not bear her full Privy Seal. Halyrud Hus, 17th June 1565.

Maria R. Queen of Scots—Warrant to a peer and "others under you to be ready to repair with all speed ye can to such leage as may be appointed, &c. 26th May 1564."

Maria R. Queen of Scots—Warrant to John Earl of Marr and others authorising them to try Rebels and Discontented Persons. 14th December 1561.

Montrose—Order for the collection of levies and cess "To the Captain commanding in Aberdeene, Thore. 19th September 1644."

Rob Roy Ro. Campbell—The name of MacGregor having been suppressed, order or cheque. Cabrach, 3d September 1732.

Oliver Cromwell—Letter, 4th September.

#### BURNS MANUSCRIPTS.

Robert Burns' letter to Mr John Ferguson, 25 High Street, Kilmarnock, Dated Edinburgh, 23d April 1787.

Letter to Robert Armstrong, Kilmarnock. Mauchline, April 1788.

Letter to Mr William Livingston, Kilmarnock. Ellisland, 4th March 1790.

Song—My Heart's in the Highlands, sent to Mr Johnson. Song to the tune of "Faihte na misig," a suggestion from Mr Johnson. Indorsed by James Hogg.

Song—O for Ane and Twenty, Tam, and Epistle to Robert Graham, of Fintray, 1791. Ind. by James Hogg.

Lines on an evening view of Lincluden Abbey. Ellisland, 1st August 1789.

Song—O, Willie Brewed a Peck o' Mant. "Sent to Mr William Nicoll, in remembrance and celebration of a pleasant meeting of some friends near Laggan, September 1789."

"Note.—This song of mine, although very descriptive of our meeting, was meant only for private remembrance, but it became so common that I had to insert it in a collection of my poems."

"Dumfries, 1795. ROBT. BURNS."

Lines—My Father was a Farmer, O. Addressed to Mrs. John Little, January 1789.

Song—O, Whistle, and I'll come to you, my Lad. Sent to Mr Thomson, August 25th, 1795. Ind. by James Hogg.

Song—O, Open the Door to Me, oh! Sent to Mr Thomson, March 21st, 1795. "Amended, see Book." Indorsed by James Hogg.

Sacred Verses—Beyond created sense. Dumfries, 15th January 1794.

Song—Carl and the King come. Mauchline, 17th September 1788.

Song—She's fair and fause. Dumfries.

Song—Awa, Whigs, awa. For Mr Johnson's Collection. [1787.]

Memorandum—Lines met with in a Book lent to me by Mr Thomson, entitled The Christian Soldier—returned December 1791. Ind. by J. H.

The Hermit—"Copy of the Lines left by me at the Hermitage, Aberfeldy, for Mr Thomson." Ind. by James Hogg.

Letter to Mr John Kennedy at Ayr. Dumfries, 28th October, 1792.

Song—Raving Winds Around Her Blowing. "Sent to Miss M'Leod of Raasay with the sympathy of Robt. Burns." Ind. by J. H.

Poem—The Owl. Ah, no, sad owl, nor is thy voice less sweet. Ind. by J. H.

Views on Despondency—Than I no longer hermit placed. "For Mr Haig from Robt. Burns." Indorsed by James Hogg.

Verses—To a lady singing a song of my composition. Altered from W—, for Miss Laurie. Robt. Burns. Indorsed by James Hogg.

"Copy of lines sent by me to John Maxwell, Esquire, of Farraughty, on his birthday."—Indorsed by James Hogg.

Poem—Masonic. Ye sons of old Killie assembled by Willie. Indorsed by James Hogg.

An Elegy on Mary Campbell. Ellisland.

Verses—"Thine eyes I love and they as pitying me." "Miss Lee, Cumnock, from Robt. Burns." February 1786. Ind. by J. H.

"A Dream, 15th January 1791.—Robt. Burns." It was with weight of woes oppress. Ind. by James Hogg.

Memorandum from A. P.—Script to the naked soul escaped from Clay, to Mr John Laurie. Indorsed by James Hogg.

Memorandum from I. D., read August 1791. Youth, beauty, graceful action seldom fail.

"Note.—This was made to form the basis of a political poem at Dumfries election.—Robt. Burns."

Poem—Absence. "For Mr Johnson. . . . I think this poem is very suitable. Robt. Burns." Ind. by James Hogg.

Poem on Love and Women. Ye fair for whom the hands of Hymen weave. Ellisland, August 1790. Ind. by J. H.

[Memorandum.] "From A. P.; his imitations of Horace, lent me by Mr Haig." "For Mr Laurie's use. Robt. Burns." Ind. by J. H.

[Memorandum.] To Blossoms, from the Scots Magazine. Fair pledges of a fruitful tree. Ind. by J. H.

Verses—Accept the Gift a Friend Sincere. Ellisland 13th May. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Memorandum from Book of Poems lent me by Mr John Haig. Recommended to Mr Johnson. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

[Memorandum] To a Candle. From a book of poems lent me by Mr Haig. Written at Ellisland when under much Tribulation in 1791. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Ode to Conscience. For Miss Laurie. Robt. Burns, Ellisland, 23 December. Ind. by J. H.

Ode to Evening. W. C. For Miss Laurie. The foregoing are the lines of poetry requested. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Ode to Disappointment. To the memory of 16th October, 1794. Robt. Burns. For Miss Laurie. Ind. by J. H.

Upon Love. Verses taken from an old Book of Poems, without any date or title-page; taken from the New Library at Mauchline. December, 1792. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song (sent to Mr Johnson.) He stole my tender heart away. Dumfries, August.

Verses—Here now behold the chaos dark and deep. Quotation from L.P. for Miss Laurie. From Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

A song—O condescend, dear charming maid. Sent to Mr Thomson for G. T., October 1793. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—From those eternal regions bright. Song for Mr Thomson by a celebrated Scots author, and certainly one which is commendatory of our country. Declined by Mr Thomson as not being sufficiently characteristic. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—To the weavers gin ye go. For Miss Laurie from her friend Robt. Burns. Ind. by James Hogg.

Verses—Stay, my charmer. I wrote these words to an old Gaelic air, The Black-headed Lad, which I heard in my recent visit to the Millars. Robt. Burns.

Song—Canst thou leave me thus, my Katie? Sent to Mr Thomson, 18th November, 1794. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—Craigieburn Wood. Alteration for Mr Thomson, August 1793. Ind. by James Hogg.

Verses—To the nightingale. Sent to Miss T., who at that time persisted in keeping a tame nightingale in a cage, where it did not sing. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Verses—Ah, cruel maid, because I see. The following lines sent to Mr Haig to remind him of an evening spent with him and a lady in Kilmarnock, 1785. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Verses—On reading of the death of a friend in the public print (I. M. of R.) Mauchline, August 1789. Ind. by J. H.

Verses—Again the silent wheels of time. Lines sent to Miss Logan. January 1, 1789. Note—I sent with this Beattie's poems. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Verses—Postscript to an earnest Cry and Prayer to the Representatives for Scotland in the House of Commons. Sent to Miss Laurie.

Sonnet—The Fickle Lover. You may apply these lines as you will, and receive them from one who has, in more than one instance, proved their truth. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Sonnet—To Mr Armstrong, Kilmarnock. From "Montalbert." You will please accept this from me as an expression of sympathy. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—The Blithrie o't. Song sent to Mr Johnson. I have taken this from memory. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Verses—Why should we idly waste our time? For Mr John Laurie. Robt. Burns. [A revolutionary song, written during the period of the French Revolution.] Ind. by J. H.

Lines on the praising of female beauty. Ellisland, September 1791. Ind. by J. H.

Verses—The Bard's Epitaph. For Miss Laurie. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Verses for a Picture. Elegy to the Earl of Glencairn. These poor lines are but a small Tribute to the memory of one who, though exalted in Station, was to the poor and distressed a friend. Ind. by J. H.

Sonnet—To the memory of my friend, Robert Riddel, Esquire. A sonnet sent to the Dumfries Journal, 1794. Ind. by J. H.

Verses sent to Mrs M—, 1794. From W. Ellisland, March 14, 1791. Ind. by J. H.

Verses—Let others creep by timid steps and slow. Memorandum.







dum from S. P. to Miss Laurie from Robt. Burns. Ellisland, November 1791. Ind. by J. H.

Verses—Behold and listen while the fair. Memorandum to Miss Laurie from W. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Verses—What though sculptured pile, &c. Sent to Miss Laurie. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Verses—No after friendship e'er can raise. Lines for Miss Laurie from L. Ellisland, November 16th. Robert Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Ballad—Fair Helen. For Miss Laurie.

Note.—This I consider one of the finest models of ballad music our country has produced. The author of it I could never learn.—Robert Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—Behold the hour the boat arrive. Copy sent to Mr Thomson, September, Tuesday. Ind. by J. H.

Memorandum from A. P. Phryne, &c., to Mr John Laurie from Robt. Burns. Ellisland, 16th October. Ind. by J. H.

Verses—The auld man (or life's decline.) October 1791. Ind. by J. H.

Song, or a New Ballad. To the tune of The Dragon of Wantley. Addressed to a well-known gentleman. Relating to the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh. Ind. by J. H.

A Toast, in water. To the tune of "Journeywork." From Robert Burns to John Turner. Dumfries, 1793. Ind. by J. H.

Ode to the Muse of Poetry, Thon Goddess since with Sacred Aid. Ellisland, 13th March 1791. Ind. by J. H.

Lines sent to Captain Riddel, The noble Maxwells and their powers. Ind. by J. H.

Poem—To Chloris. 'Tis Friendship's pledge, my young fair friend. To be sent to Mr Thomson. September 1791. Ind. by J. H.

Song—Since robbed of all that charmed my view. A song sent by a friend. Print this. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—Mr Johnson. O bitter, bitter is the tear. Miss C. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—If those who live in Shepherd's bower. Song for Mr Thomson's arrangement from Alfred. Sent to Mr Thomson. Ind. by J. H.

Lines sent to John Forbes for his friend, 1790—Doris, a nymph of riper age. Note.—This piece was sent to Mr Forbes for the gratification of one of his lady friends. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Lines to Mrs Riddel of Woodley Park, Nov. 4, 1793, her birthday. Ind. by J. H.

Song—Go, lovely rose. Song for Mr Johnson's Museum from an English melody book. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—There a Youth in this City. Song sent to Mr Thomson. Ind. by J. H.

Song—'Tis not your beauty can engage. A song for Eliza. Sent to Captain Weir. You must pardon the verses being a mere copy. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—Say, lovely dream, where couldst thou find. Song sent to Mr John Haig for Miss Laurie. Ind. by J. H.

Song—The day is departed, and round from the cloud. Song for Mr Johnson. Sent him in August last. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—All lonely on the sultry beach. Song to Mr Johnson. Sent him. Ind. by J. H.

Song—I do confess thou art sae fair. Song for Mr Johnson. Ind. by J. H.

Lines to Sleep—Sleep, wayward God, hath sworn. This would be suitable for the end of the collection. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Ode to Hope. From R. F. Hope, lively cheerer of the mind. For Miss Laurie from Robert Burns. Ellisland, September 1790. Ind. by J. H.

Song—The Rosebud. From W., proposed to Mr Johnson. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—Chloris, Chloris, farewell, I now must go. For Miss Laurie, from the poems of W. From Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—Ah, the poor Shepherd's mournful fate. Song to the tune of Galashiels. For Mr Johnson. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—Dumfries Election Song. The laddies by the Banks of Nith. Sent by me to Robert Graham, Esquire of Fintry, and others. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—It is na, Lass, thy bonnie face. Song to the tune of "The Maid's Complaint." For Mr Johnson. Altered from the English words. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—Drink. Gle him strong drink, until he wink. For Mr Haig's edification, from Robt. Burns. Ellisland. Ind. by J. H.

Song—Laddie, lie near me. Mr Johnson accepted this. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Memorandum—Logan's ode to the cuckoo. To Miss Laurie, from Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—To Laura. For Mr Thomson. Sent 28th October 1793. The foregoing song may not be altogether suitable, but as it is good poetry, I think its merits allow it a permanent place in your volumes. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song to a Lady—Sensibility, how charming. For Miss Aitken, from Robt. Burns.

Song—Hard is the fate of one who loves. Song recommended by the Earl of Buchan at one of his entertainments at Dryburgh. Robt. Burns. With initials of Motherwell. Ind. by J. H.

Ode—Stoop from Heaven, ye raptured throng. I forget where or when I wrote the lines on the back of this, but it is very likely to have been at Mossiel. Robt. Burns.

Lines—Listen to your Shepherd's lay. Written at Mossiel, August, about 1784.

Memorandum—On the Village Plain. Ellisland, 1st September. Robert Burns.

Poem—To Despair. (May 1786.)

Lines—To Decay of Pleasure. I think this would be a good song for Mr L., or one in the same strain. Robt. Burns. Dumfries, March 1781.

Poem—To the Muse. Mossiel, January 1786. R. B.

Song—O, Mally's meek, Mally's sweet. For Miss Laurie. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Lines sent to a young friend who was much troubled about the state of his conscience. The Great Creator to revere. Ind. by J. H.

Song—On the Banks of Nith. For Mr Thomson. Copy sent 1793, May. Robt. Burns. Ind. by James Hogg.

Song—Beauteous rosebud, young and gay. Sent by me to Miss Cruickshank. Ind. by J. H.

Lines—Remorse. For Gilbert Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Poem—Memorandum from W. For imitation.

Note.—This poem, at Mr Johnson's request, was proposed to me for imitation, but was never held by me in any repute. It is nothing more than an old conceit. R. B.

Song—To Mary. For Mr Johnson's Musical Museum, copied by me from the E. W. I think this will set to music well, and is good for insertion in your collection. Robt. Burns.

Memorandum—A winter's night. Blow, blow, ye winds with heavier gust! Ind. by J. H.

Song—The other morn. For Mr Johnson. Sent him.

Note.—These verses go to a tune, the name of which I do not know, but it is a Gaelic one. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—To a Kiss. Humid seal of soft affections. To be given to Miss Laurie. Ind. by J. H.

Poem—An Elegy to Sleep. For Miss Laurie from Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Poem—Sir, o'er a gill I got your card. Letter sent by me to Mr Macadam for a favourable answer, received from him in answer to a letter sent to Mr W.—Mr Woodburn. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Poem—Happiness. Right blessed the man who free from bitter tale. Ellisland, May 1791.

Lines for Mr Armstrong. Sent to him October 27, 1795. I think that these lines will please you, and I did not forget your feelings in a place, which you must ever hold sacred, where I last met you. Ind. by J. H.

Song—Love is the cause of my mourning. For Mr Johnson, November 1794. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—On the Rosebud. I send you the foregoing song that you may consider its adaptability for your purpose. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—Ah, woe is me, my mither dear. Ind. by J. H.

Song—A lover's salute to his mistress. Sent to Mr Thomson, Dumfries, October 1794. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—Forlorn, my love, no comfort near. (Air—Let me in this ae night.) Sent to Miss Laurie and Mr Thomson. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—Amidst a rosy bank of flowers. For Mr Johnson sent. If it is thought suitable this is what you desired me to send for the style only. It will go to many a tune. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Lines—No more my song shall be ye swains. For Mr Johnson's collection. Note.—This poem I received from my friend Dr Blacklock. Robt. Burns.

Poem—A Reverie. Ellisland, January 13, 1790. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—The Farewell. Farewell auld Scotia's bleak domains. For Mr Johnson. The Farewell composed by me in 1786, and which I think might be used as a song. Could you not find an air for it? Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—To the tune of "Bonnie Dundee." True-hearted was he the sad swain of the Yarrow. To my young friend Miss Haig, April 1793. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Memorandum—Lines copied from W. for Mr Nicol, and sent by him to L. some years ago. Ind. by J. H.

Song—The Nightingale. Thou sweetest minstrel of the grove. Sent to Mr Thomson. G. T., October 1713. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Song—As the character of the ruined farmer. (Go from my window, love.) The sun he is sunk in the west. To Miss Laurie. Ind. by J. H.

Song—The Black Eagle. Song for Mr Johnson. Ind. by J. H.

Lines—To a Lady. Sweet Virgin that I do not sit. Sent December 1792. From H.

Memorandum—This might be suitably arranged for a Doric Song in the Scotch dialect. Robt. Burns. Ind. by J. H.

Lines sent to Mrs Dunlop, New Year's Day, 1790:—  
This day Time winds the exhausted chain  
To run the twelve months length again.  
With the compliments and best wishes of the author. Robt. Burns, January 1790. Ind. by J. H.

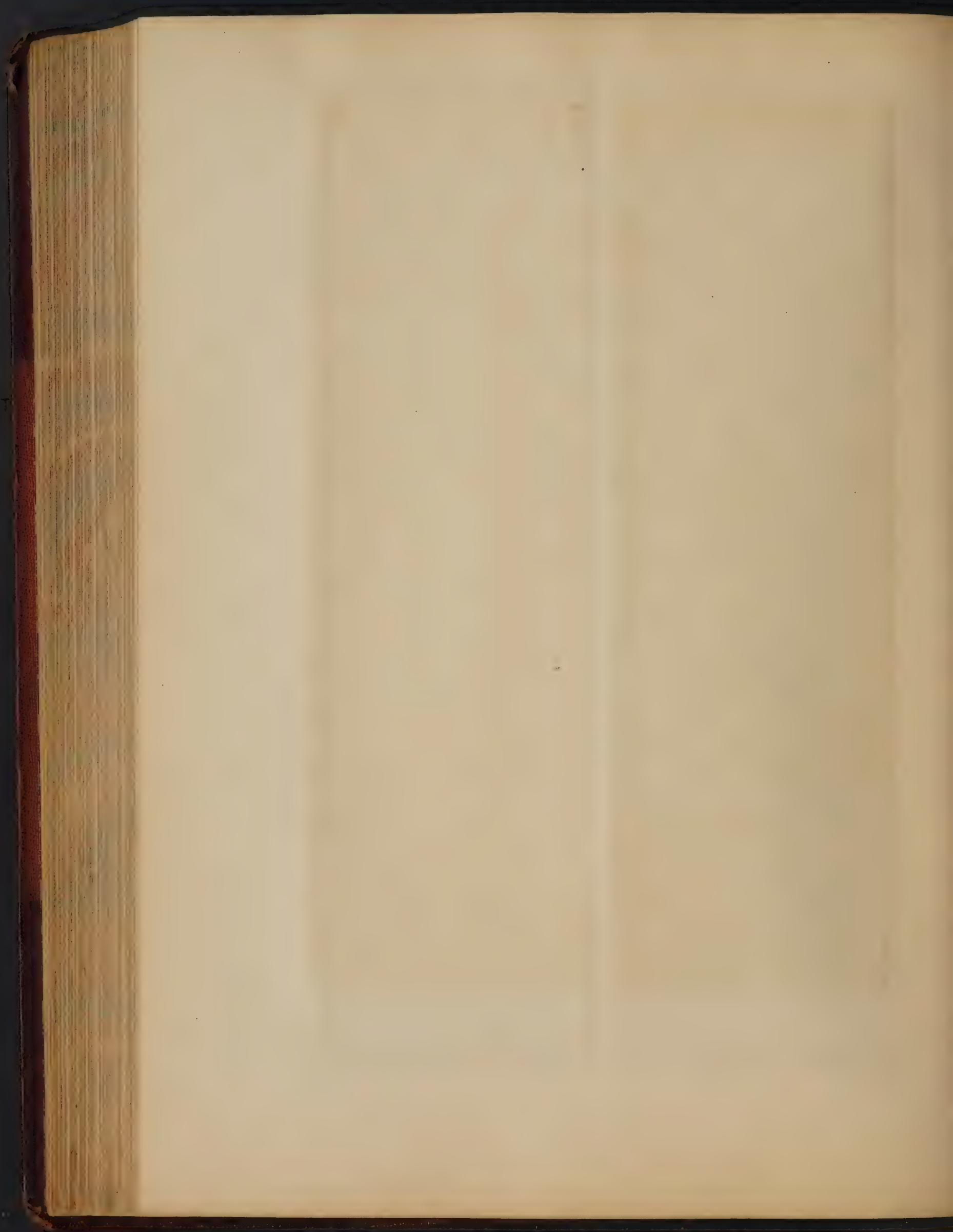
#### LONDON OPINION.

Holders of MSS. who desire the opinion of the British Museum experts should not send their manuscripts direct, as the officials are prohibited from offering opinions in such cases. As already announced, however, they may be sent through Mr Morrison, Public Library, Edinburgh. If a manuscript is submitted for purchase the same rule does not apply.

In the London paper *The Morning* some interviews are given in reference to the forgeries. Mr E. J. L. Scott, who is at the head of the Manuscript Department of the British Museum, states that on Tuesday last a parcel of Burns MSS. came to him from Scotland. It was not presented for purchase, but for expert opinion, and this Mr Scott very properly declined to give. He returned the parcel unopened. With regard to literary forgeries generally, Mr Scott states that the Museum is not often troubled with them. Whenever it is, the bogus manuscripts are instantly detected. Says Mr Scott, "No forger can escape detection; there are hundreds of ways in which he is bound to be found out. But it is not for me to give advice to private individuals. If I did I might have to mix myself up in legal proceedings. *Caveat emptor*—let buyers of MSS. look after themselves."

There are two firms in London through whose hands pass almost all the valuable MSS. which come into the market in this country—viz., Messrs Puttick & Simpson, of Leicester Square, and Messrs Sotheby, Wilkinson, & Hodge, of 13 Wellington Street, Strand. In an interview with Mr W. Wilson, a member of the first-named of these firms, *The Morning* representative was informed that a number of letters purporting to be in the handwriting of Robert Burns were submitted to him some time back for an expert opinion as to their genuineness. They were sent by the clerk of a certain Scottish Town Council in the name of that local authority, and were examined at the British Museum. "But whether or not the documents we examined were, in our opinion, forgeries," said Mr Wilson, "we declined to state. We employ specially trained experts, who have made the valuation of MSS. and books a life-long







study. "We do not give away our knowledge even to Scottish Town Councils. We handle books and MSS. by hundreds of thousands every year, both as auctioneers and in valuing for probate, and as we frequently have to make advances, we are obliged to be very keen on these matters." Mr. Wilson admits that there are a vast number of forgeries, not only of MSS., but even of printed books and bookbindings in circulation, but declares that they never pass the best experts without detection.

Mr. Hodge, jun., of the firm of Sotheby, Wilkinson, & Hodge, states that many applications for opinions have been made to him, and, although protesting against the idea which seems to possess the mind of the autograph-hunting public that his firm exists purely for philanthropic purposes, he has on many occasions given those opinions. Among other forgeries his firm has had to condemn a large number of MSS. purporting to be in the handwriting of Robert Burns. To Mr. Hodge's mind all the Burns forgeries have been the work of one man. The handwriting of the poet has been cleverly imitated, but the forger has failed in the matter of ageing his paper. He has used smoke too superficially. Still the forgeries were good enough to deceive any one but an expert. "Many private buyers have been deceived," said Mr. Hodge. "Documents which would have been worth hundreds of pounds if they had been genuine have been submitted to me from Scotland. I think that if light can be thrown on this subject it will be doing a great service to the public." Mr. Hodge does not think that many of these Scottish forgeries have passed through London. *The Morning* is in error when it states that the market for Burns relics is "wholly in the hands of Scotsmen." On the contrary, many Englishmen are among the foremost and most enthusiastic collectors; and it is equally far at sea when it says that "none of either the 'Burns' or 'Scott' forgeries have made their way south of the Tweed—at least publicly."

#### FORGERIES DETECTED IN ENGLAND.

A proof that the forgeries were offered for sale in England reaches us to-day. Messrs Noel Conway & Co., experts, collectors and dealers in manuscripts, autographs, &c., writes to us:—

"Antiquarian Chambers, 50b New Street,  
Birmingham, December 6, 1892.

"DEAR SIR,—We pronounced a number of these documents [Burns] as forgeries in March 1890 to Mr James Stillie, who offered them to us at an absurdly small price. We hold his correspondence."

#### OPINION OF THE LIBRARIAN OF THE MITCHELL LIBRARY.

One of our Glasgow reporters yesterday had an interview with Mr F. T. Barrett, chief librarian at the Mitchell Library in that city, with reference to the forgeries. In the Mitchell Library there was housed, he said, probably the largest collection of Burns books in existence, but they had no Burns manuscripts. He had, however, Burns MSS. frequently submitted to him, and in the course of the present year two manuscripts had been shown to him which he did not consider genuine. One he remembered was on a "thinish blue" paper, which appeared to be considerably more modern than the alleged date upon it. In view of the approaching Burns Exhibition in Glasgow, he considered it specially fortunate that the forgeries had been discovered now. "The air," he put it, "was full of suspicion," and it had now been practically cleared by the discovery of the forgeries. He thought it very desirable that when the trial was over and judgment arrived at, the whole circumstances connected with the forgeries should be arranged in narrative form and published. "It would certainly be a very curious bit of literary history," he added. This led Mr Barrett to refer to the notorious Ireland forgeries, and he produced one or two volumes published bearing on and giving illustrations of these fabrications. One was a huge tome, having on the title-page, "Miscellaneous papers and legal instruments in the hand and style of William Shakspeare, including the tragedy of

'King Lear' and a small fragment of 'Hamlet' from the original MSS." This was published in 1796—the year of Burns' death—and contained papers not only by Shakespeare himself, but also by Queen Elizabeth, Lord Southampton, and Anne Hathaway. Another of the forgeries by Ireland was that of "Vortigern, an original play represented at the Theatre-Royal, Drury Lane," a supposed newly-discovered drama of Shakespeare. In the preface to "Vortigern," which was written after the forgeries had been discovered and admitted, Ireland mentions that in talking with John Philip the conversation turned on Shakespeare and Ireland's fabrications, "when, on a sudden, pausing, my ponderous companion having summoned up a look of mightiest import addressed me thus—'You must be aware, sir, of the enormous crime you committed against the divinity of Shakespeare. Why, sir, the act, sir, was nothing short of sacrilege. It was precisely the same thing as taking the holy chalice from the altar, and . . . therein.'"

#### FAIRPLAY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

13 Bright's Crescent,  
Edinburgh, December 6, 1892.

SIR,—Having read with interest every word of your revelations regarding the above, the writer, while behind no one in heartily commending the public spirit you have displayed, ventures to pen a few lines in the cause of fairplay.

In discussing simple matters of fact or questions of principle, it may concern no one who the disputants may be; but, as soon as the discussion assumes a personal character, surely those attacked have a right to know who their assailants are. Now, in your to-day's issue, an anonymous correspondent levels personal insinuations at Mr Mackenzie (who is a total stranger to me, and may, or may not, be altogether in the wrong), and, in doing so, repeatedly uses the formula "I challenge." By what right does an anonymous writer do anything of the sort? In the days of chivalry the "challenger" boldly entered the lists and took the chance of getting as good as he gave. Had he attempted to shelter himself behind a barricade, in what manner would his "challenge" have been received by the spectators as well as the challenged? How wofully degenerate are these modern times!

In a former issue some one signed himself "One Who Knows." Now, this is common, and perhaps excusable on account of its commonness; but it is nevertheless contemptible. That a person laying claim to special knowledge should, under the screen of anonymity, prevent that claim from being put to the test, is scarcely honest.

Would your to-day's correspondent have ventured to apply his nasty little epithet, "a small confession," to Captain Moir Bryce's frank and straightforward statement, had he been obliged to append his name to his letter?—I am, &c. JAS. D. WALKER.

[Mr Walker, we suppose, will not deny that even in the days of chivalry the identity of the challenger was not always declared along with the challenge. We may assure him that the challenger in question is a very prominent citizen; but the mere individuality of the writer is not of the first importance in such a controversy—the truth's the thing; and Mr Walker will surely not, with all his desire for fairplay, affirm that Mr Mackenzie has treated the public with candour in this matter.]

#### THE MSS. FORGERIES.

##### SMITH BEFORE THE FISCAL.

"ANTIQUE" SMITH, according to the usual custom, to-day made a declaration (which, of course, is private) before the Procurator-Fiscal and Bailie Macpherson, and was afterwards recommitted to prison pending further inquiry. The case will in course of time be reported by the Procurator-Fiscal to the Crown authorities, upon whom it will devolve to determine the form of Smith's trial.





## Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.

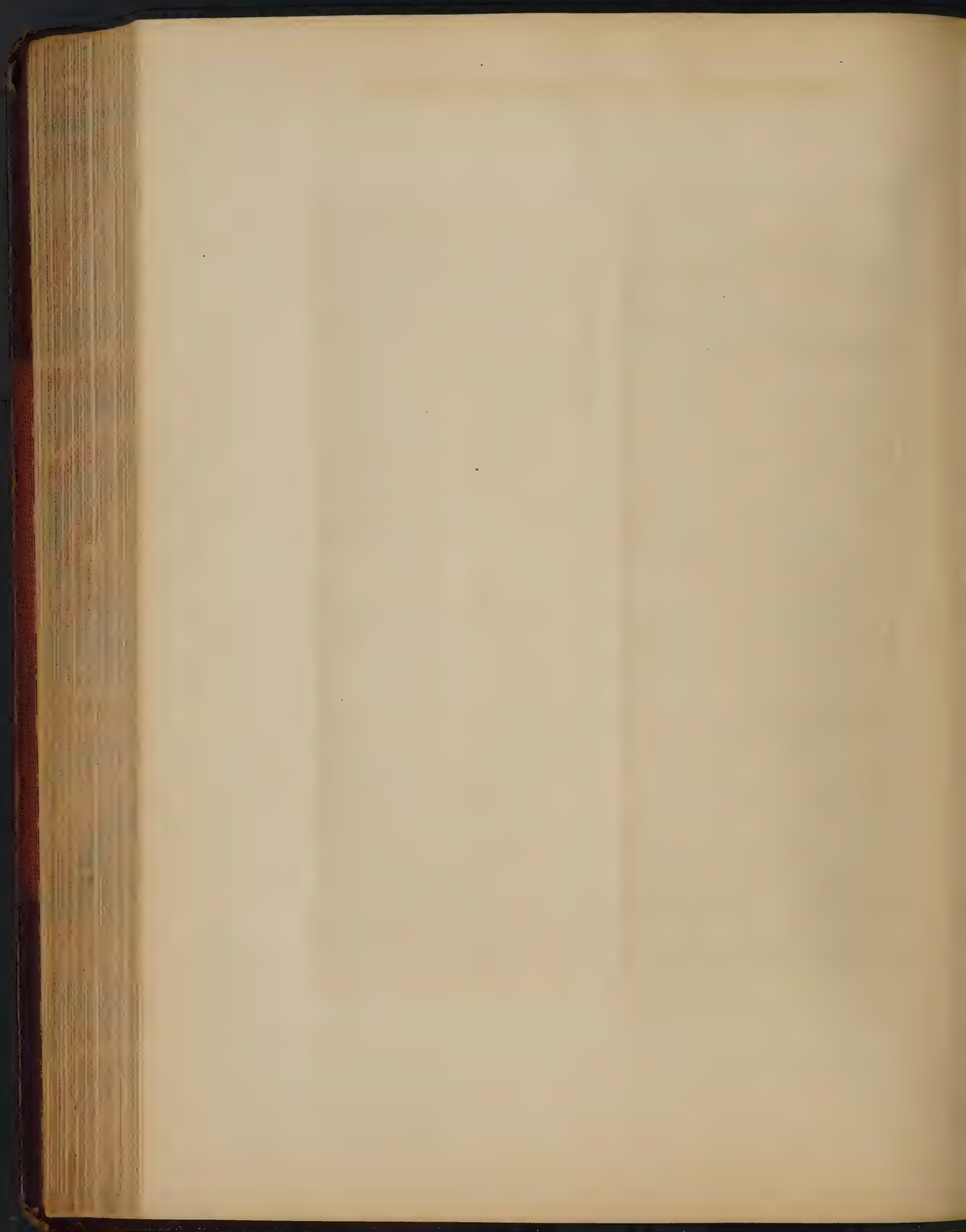
EDINBURGH, THURSDAY, December 8, 1892.

EVIDENCE is given to-day to show that the Kennedy collection of MSS. is very likely spurious.

SPECIMENS selected from Mr Stillie's stock of "Burns" MSS. in Edinburgh have been pronounced spurious by the British Museum authorities.

THE interesting letter from Mr H. F. Morland Simpson, M.A., of Fettes College, who is a Fellow of the Scottish Antiquarian Society, together with private communications on the same subject, and the condemnation of Mr Stillie's "Burns" MSS. by the British Museum, goes far to confirm the suspicion that the Kennedy Collection in the Lenox Library of New York is entirely or partially bogus. Until the whole of the documents have been subjected to a thorough test by gentlemen who are recognised as authorities, it would, of course, be improper to assert as a positive fact that the New York MSS. are already proved to be spurious; but we may say that from all we can ascertain on the subject—as to their origin, character, and so forth—it would create no surprise should it turn out that they are one and all false; and we may go further and say that, so far as Burns is concerned, it will probably be found that the false documents in circulation outnumber the real MSS. of the Poet; while as for Sir Walter Scott, the forger seems to have acquired as much facility in dashing off a passable representation of the Novelist's handwriting as if it were his own habitual style. With such facts before us, it is impossible not to admire the colossal impudence of the man, in comparison with whom, as we said at the beginning of the discussion, Macpherson, Chatterton, Ireland, *et hoc genus omne* were as babes and sucklings. Old Ritson used to say that "every literary impostor deserved hanging as much as a common thief." How the same authority would have punished the present forger it is "better only guessing," as the wicked say, according to Clough, in regard to their own possible chastisement. Maybe "something lingering, with boiling oil in it,"

as the Mikado once suggested. One feels half-inclined, however, to forgive the rogue for his cleverness in that he has sounded the lowest depths of mortal credulity, and that his literary shams have won so many believers before the learned world. How history repeats itself! In his "confession," Ireland, the young law student, attributed his forgeries to "curiosity to see how far credulity would go in the search of antiquities." His nineteenth century imitator, less fortunate than Ireland (whose merits were never recognised by the law), must chuckle consumedly when he thinks of the wise, pompous, sagacious people he has deceived by his mawkish stuff, unworthy of a "Laura Matilda's" brewing, much less a Burns's composition. For material he had only to enter those happy hunting-grounds the old volumes of the *London Magazine*, from which—as with the "Poor Man's Prayer"—many of the gems in yesterday's list of Mr Kennedy's recent treasures are culled, not a few of them, like Collins's "Ode," penned before Burns was born. It is to be hoped that before the case is ended and public interest in it has subsided, some further steps will be taken to carry out the admirable suggestion of Mr John Muir in our issue of yesterday, that there should be a complete bibliographical catalogue of Burns' MSS., giving their history, present locale, &c. If the innumerable Burns Clubs throughout the world would only take the matter up as zealously as they do that annual gizzle, the celebration of the Poet's birthday, there should be no difficulty in compiling and publishing a *fac-simile* edition of all the writings of Burns extant in MSS., *verbatim et literatim*, as written by Burns himself. This would give the *coup de grâce* to the efforts of clever men like the professional forger, who entertain such a very low and not unjustifiable opinion of critical tact, and has discovered that critics find merit in anything which seems old enough, though verily it may be but of yesterday. Such a work, which would prove invaluable to collectors, ought to pay a publisher to produce; and we trust the suggestion will not be lost sight of, in despite of the poor results attained so far by Mr Muir in bringing about a consummation devoutly to be wished" by every lover of Burns and his imperishable work.





## THE MSS. FORGERIES.

### MORE EXPOSURES OF SPURIOUS BURNS MSS.

Mr Andrew Tod had from his relative, Mr Kennedy, of New York, authority to purchase a number of what appeared to be very interesting Burns MSS. from Mr Stillie, provided they were genuine. Mr Stillie handed the documents to Mr Tod, who, through Mr Hew Morrison, of the Edinburgh Public Library, sent them for an opinion to the British Museum authorities, and the following reply was received this morning:—

British Museum, London,  
December 7, 1892.

DEAR SIR,—I have been too busy with official work for the last few days to examine your MSS. I have now done so, and return them by this post. They are palpable forgeries. I fancy that some of the documents presented by your friend to New York are also forgeries.—Believe me, yours very truly,

E. MAUNDE THOMPSON.

Andrew Tod, Esq.

It is only right to say,—and we do it with the utmost pleasure,—that Mr Stillie has so far begun to doubt his own judgment in the matter of MSS., now that it has been made so plain to everybody that forged MSS. are afloat, that he was very willing that Mr Tod should send them to the British Museum for the opinion of the experts there. What will he say to the letter in reply?

The bundle of MSS. was a very remarkable one. Each document in it purported to have been sent by Burns to Henry Mackenzie, "The Man of Feeling" (no connection of the Forrest Road chemist), as he was called—a well-known Edinburgh literary celebrity of the end of the last and beginning of the present century. They were:—

(1) A copy of the "Cottar's Saturday Night," omitting the first verse which is in the usual editions, and purporting, as we have said, to have been sent by Burns to Henry Mackenzie. It was initialed on the back by Mackenzie, and it had a laboured docket, also by Burns himself.

(2) A MS. of "The Twa Brigs of Ayr," on the thin blue paper so frequently referred to and initialed as above. This one is spoken of as an undoubted and palpable forgery.

(3) A MS. of "Auld Lang Syne" and "My Bonnie Mary" on small thin quarto paper.

(4) Also a well-executed MS. of "Tam O'Shanter" (also from Burns to Mackenzie.)

The MSS. of "The Cottar's Saturday Night," and the "Brigs of Ayr" are neatly folded in the style usual in lawyers' offices, and bound with a green ribbon, which has in a wonderful way preserved its freshness supposing it to be old.

Is it too much to suggest to Mr Stillie that here is a case which he ought immediately to put into the hands of the police for investigation by a trained officer. He no doubt knows where this important bundle of MSS. came from, and tracking down of the forger in the circumstances

cannot be difficult. On the supposition that they are genuine, the pedigree of these MSS. must be known, and the publication of it at this time would do much to allay the suspicion which has been thrown on all Burns MSS. now in the market.

### MONTROSE MSS. AMONG THE KENNEDY DONATIONS TO THE LENOX LIBRARY AND OTHERS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

Fettes College, December 7, 1892.

SIR,—Several of the Montrose MS. in your list of this evening's, and probably all, are forgeries.

(1) Montrose. "Report as to state of the troops, &c., on his taking command, signed Montrose, League of Durris, 23d January 1644."

A very clumsy forgery. Montrose's commission to command in Scotland, which is now in the family charter chest, was not made out till February 1st, 1644. In January Montrose was at Oxford, and did not raise his standard in Athole till July.—Tippermuir Battle, September 1st, 1644.

(2) Montrose. "Order for the burning of Urie Castle, Dec. 16, 1644."

Urie is in Kincardineshire. From December 13th to ca. January 28, 1645, Montrose was harrying Argyll's country.—Inverlochie, February 2d.

(3) Montrose. "Order for the collection of levies and cess to the Captain commanding in Aberdeene. There, 19th September 1644."

Who or what was "there?" The battle of Aberdeen was fought September 13th. Argyll reached Inverurie on the 16th. On the same day Montrose, informed of his approach, marched off to Drum. Three days afterwards, on the 19th, the date of this document, Argyll entered Aberdeen.

May I be allowed to add to the list of forgeries (by the same hand?) a further list of five Montrose MSS. which I have recently seen, or seen advertised?

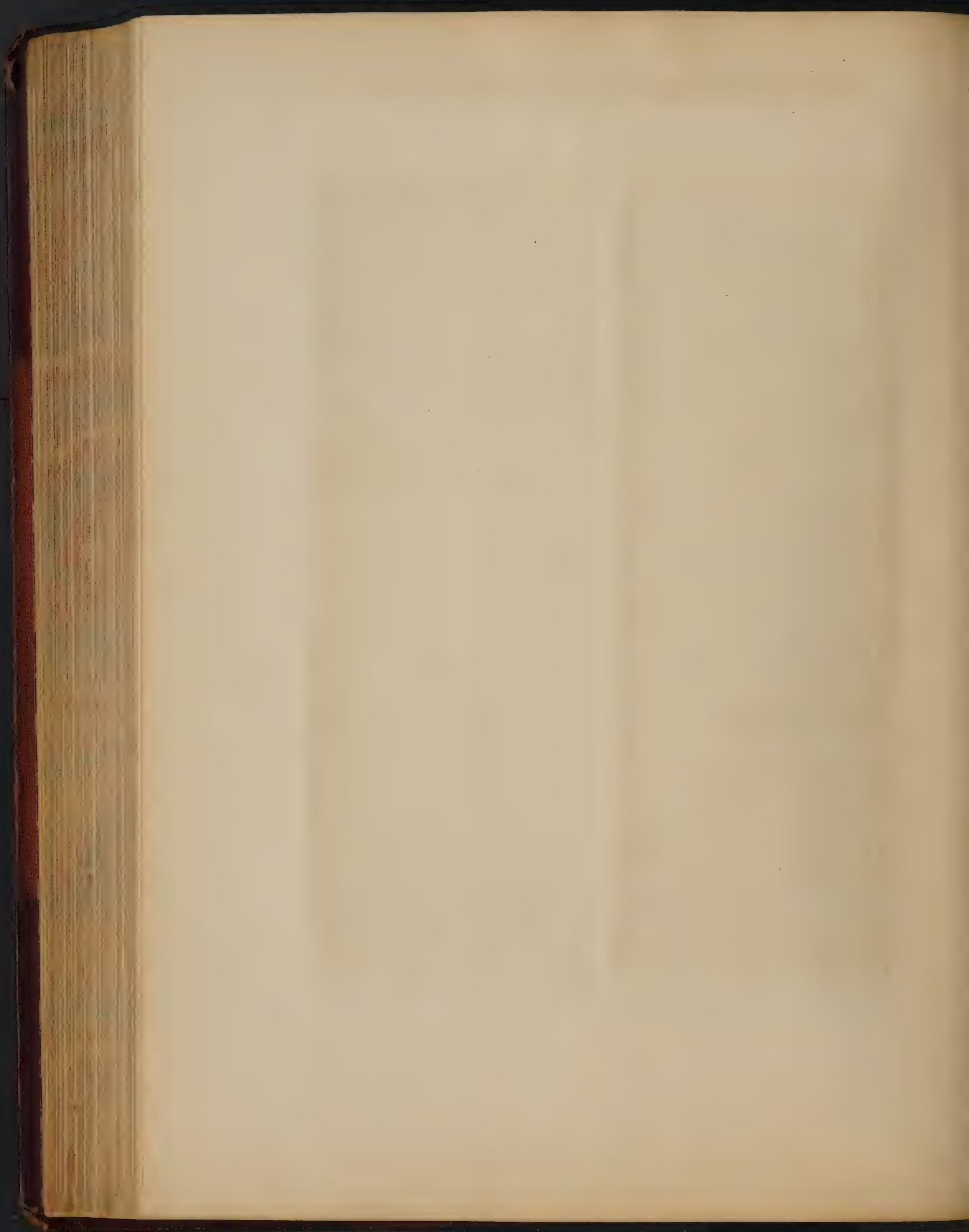
(4) Montrose. Inverness, 13th January 1645. Holograph letter as to the capitulation of said city of Inverness.

As we have seen, Montrose was then in Argyll's country. In January the Covenanters had a strong garrison of veterans in Inverness. These formed part of a force of 5000 raised by Seaforth to head Montrose off from the north, the cause of his countermarch on Argyll at Inverlochie. Montrose after this did not reach Elgin till February 19th.

(5) Montrose. Letter "to my Lords, dated at my house in Paris, March 15, 1647;" endorsed "Mackenzie."

On this very day Henrietta at Paris wrote him a letter, dispatched by Ashburnham, who met Montrose in Flanders, on his way from Hamburg to Paris.

(6) Montrose. Pass signed from the League at Selcrik, 13 Sep. 1645, to Mr Andrew Walker of Otterburn, and Mr James, his brother, to Durham.





Advertised as "two days before the Battle of Philiphaugh."

Montrose was surprised at Philiphaugh on September 18th, *early*, and probably had no time for pass writing. He had much ado to get away himself. He *might* have written the pass in the small hours of the night, when he was engaged in writing dispatches for the King, but "Walker" is suspicious! Anyhow, after this document, we should not expect to find in the same list—

(7) Montrose, Marquis. Letter, signed 2d October 1645. Before our camp of Philiphaugh. Commission to James Macpherson, Indweller, Auchontyrie, to be a Captain in the Army of Charles I., "with two curious notes thereon."

(8) Information for my Lord Ogilvie from the Duke of Montrose and letter annexed from Lord Fairfax, 25th August 1644, to Lord General Leslie, with "an interesting note by Mr Maidment as to the Duke of Montrose, who was executed 21st May 1650," &c.

"Duke" is too good! Shades of Maidment!

—I am, &c. H. F. MORLAND SIMPSON.

#### AN AWKWARD FIX.

An amusing instance of the tight places into which many people have been put by the purchase of these spurious MSS. has just come to our knowledge. In 1890 the esteemed Consul of the United States in Edinburgh—Mr Wallace Bruce—purchased a MS. of a poem by Burns, "The Blue-Eyed Lassie." Mr Wallace Bruce, it is well known, is a Burns enthusiast, and perhaps knows his Burns as well as his Bible; and he naturally wished his friends to share in the treasure that had come into his possession. He accordingly had "The Blue-Eyed Lassie" executed in *facsimile* and, done up as a neat Christmas card, he sent copies to his friends at home and abroad. Alas! it seems this "Blue-Eyed Lassie" has turned out no better than she should be. From the *facsimile* the MS. has been pronounced spurious. Would Mr Wallace Bruce mind saying where he picked up the MS.?

#### COLLINS' ODE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."] 30 Howe Street, December 7, 1892.

SIR,—In the article in your issue of to-day on the "MSS. Frauds" you wish traced the ode called "An Ode from S— for Mr Johnson." This was written by William Collins, and the correct title is "Ode written in the year 1746."—I am, &c.

CHRISTINA GALBRAITH.

[We thank our correspondent, who, it will be remembered, assisted in tracing other forgeries. Several other correspondents also succeed in identifying the Ode, Mr Stronach having done so shortly after the issue of our first edition yesterday.]

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."] Glasgow, December 7, 1892.

SIR,—Passing through Glasgow this evening, I have read with interest all that the *Dispatch* contains in re the Burns MSS. frauds. The question is interesting to an unusual degree, and the end of the controversy is not yet within sight, and much will be learned on the way thither.

Your correspondents are invited to trace the ode "How Sleep the Brave," &c., one of the most delightful examples of lyric art in our literature. It is written by Collins. It has been set to music, but it yet waits for a composer who can do it such justice as will glorify alike the poet and the musician.—I am, &c. VIATOR.

#### GLASGOW AND THE FORGERIES.

Our reporters in Glasgow have ascertained that a considerable number of the forged Burns and Scott MSS. have found their way into the hands of dealers in that city. One of the leading dealers there has stated that during the past two years he has had several spurious MSS. offered to him. Although knowing them to be forgeries he bought specimens both of Burns and Scott documents for the purpose of keeping them alongside originals in his possession. Some of the MSS. which were first presented to him he detected as forgeries, through the deposit of ink being equal from top to bottom. The later ones, however, he noticed had been gone over with a pen for the purpose of giving irregularity to the writing here and there. In connection with the mention of Excise paper, this dealer states that some of the documents are of a date years antecedent to Burns having any connection with the Excise, so that they could not have been on Excise paper if genuine. For instance, he said one document was asserted to be on Excise paper, and, if genuine, it must have been written in 1786, and in the town of Kilmarnock.

#### THE CHEMICAL TEST.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."] December 7, 1892.

SIR,—In perusing your issue of to-night on the "means of detecting fraud" by Robert Irvine, F.R.S.E., F.C.S., particular stress must be placed upon the words "ordinary writing is easily removed when it is acted upon by bleaching agents." Mr Irvine's experiments were only made upon documents written with "ordinary writing ink." Now, chlorine is unable to bleach mineral colours, and the difference between printers' ink coloured by lamp black or carbon and "ordinary writing ink" is well illustrated by placing a sheet of paper having characters written and printed upon it in a solution of chlorine in water. The former with the written matter will be completely acted upon by the bleaching agent, while the latter will be in no way affected. From the above it will be seen that the person inclined to forge only requires to use an ink similar to what is used for printing purposes to defy the bleaching test.—I am, &c.

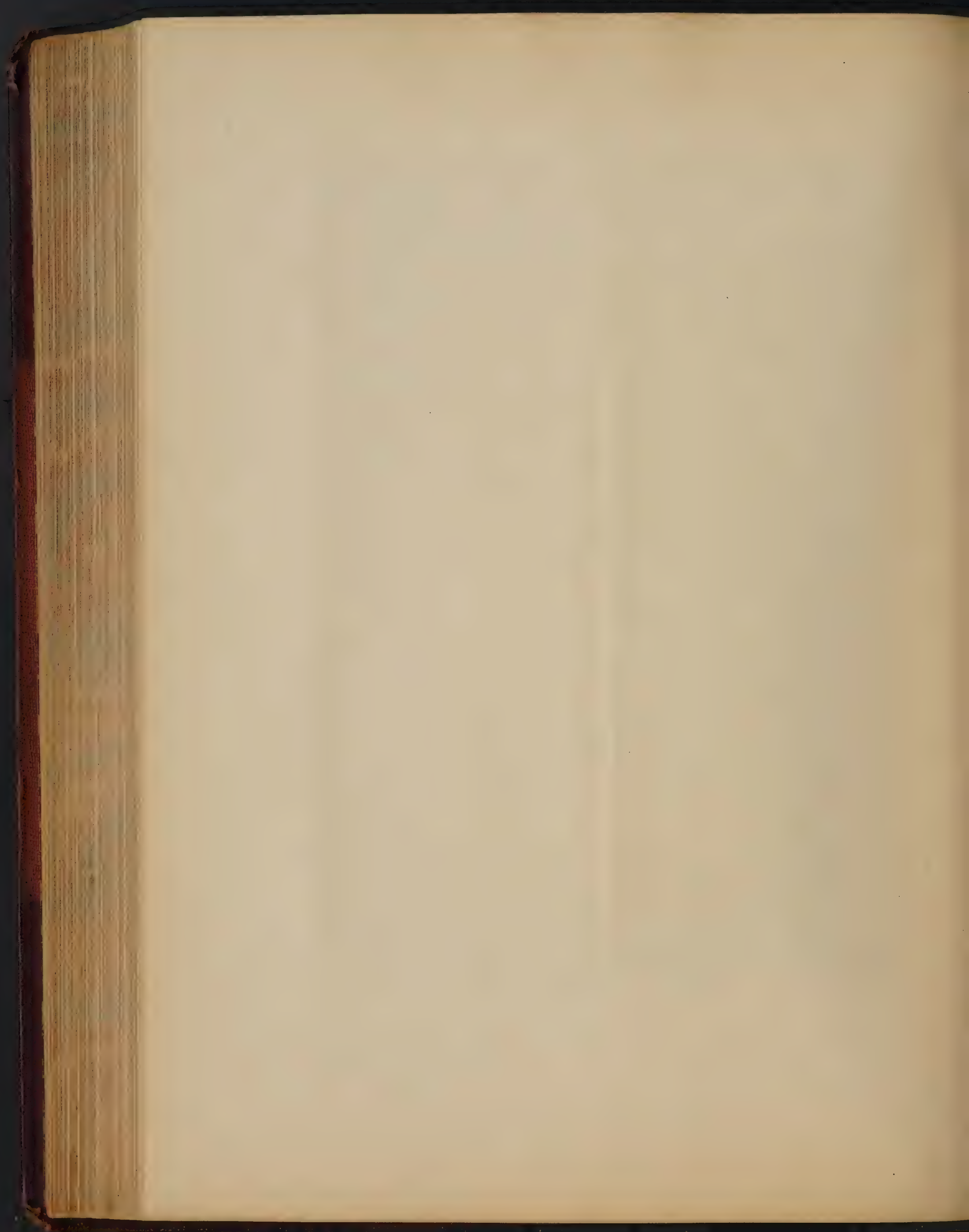
CHARLES BAYNE.

#### THE CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD BE DISCLOSED.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

SIR,—Before the literary public (especially the "imposed upon" portion of it) can in however limited a degree be in a position to properly appreciate "G. M. W.'s" highly imaginative "gush" about "relics of Great Unknowns of sixty years since," &c. &c., and "let pass" Mr Stillie's prominent part in the dissemination, however unwittingly, of those "audacious forgeries" which the persistently patriotic spirit of the *Evening Dispatch* has so unflinchingly and surely unveiled, it is more than expedient that they should know at what prices Mr Stillie and others acquired those (quasi) precious manuscripts, and in that view it is greatly to be desired for Mr Stillie's and every other man's sake that the whole circumstances shall be disclosed by those who took part in them.—I am, &c.

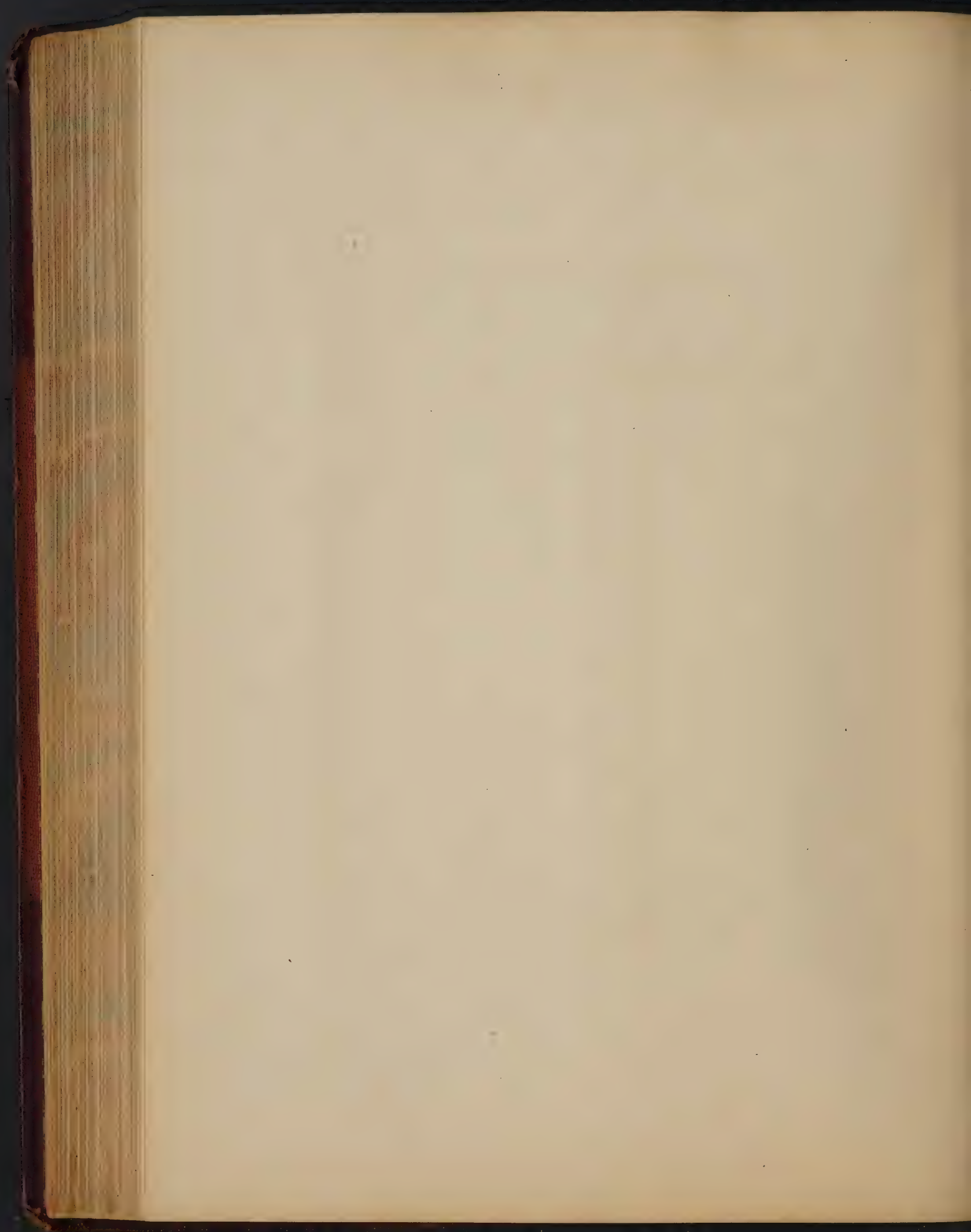
CRUX CRUCIS.





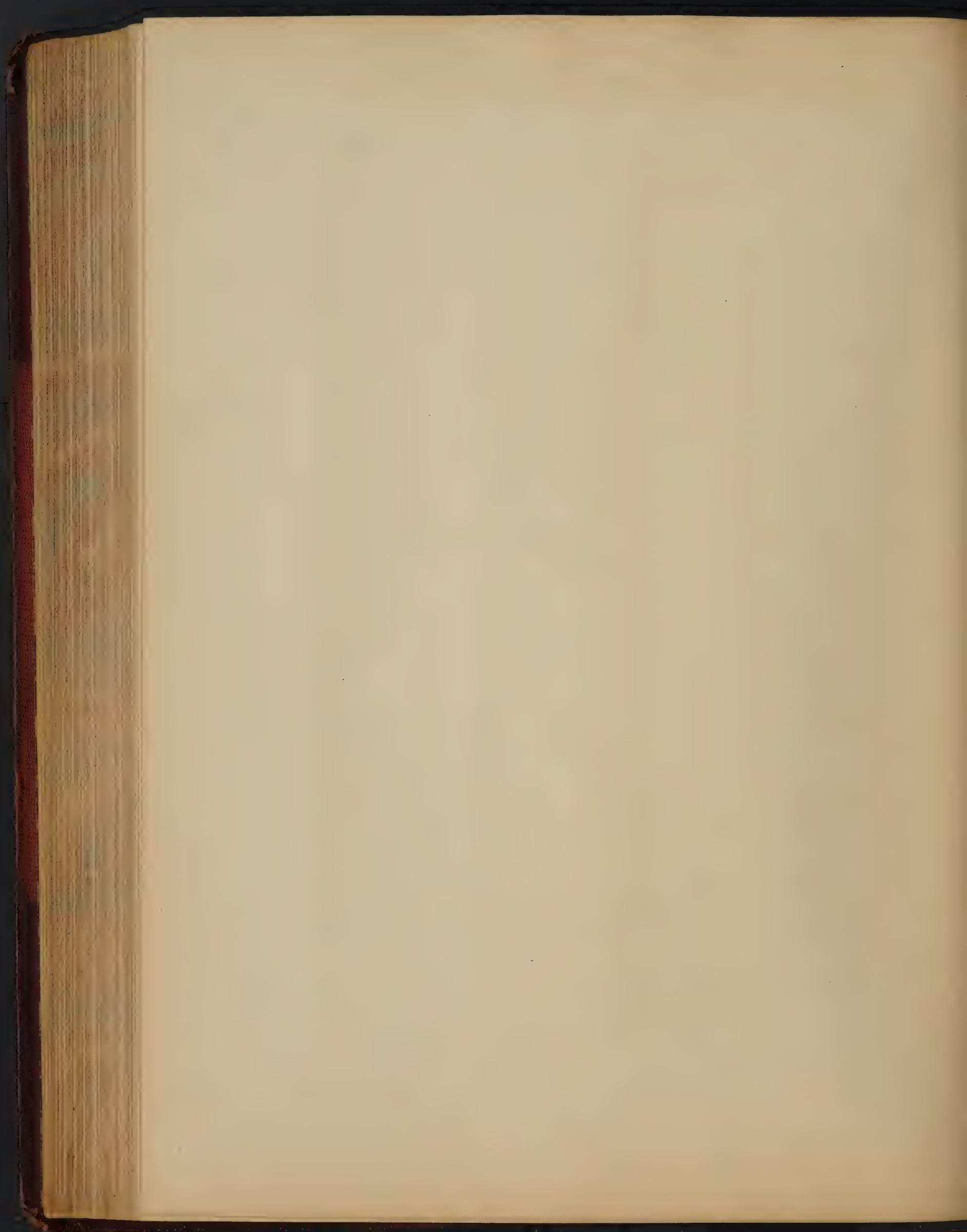
A considerable time has elapsed since I first remarked upon the extraordinary plethora of Burns's "relics," sales of which had become quite a monthly occurrence. It has now been discovered that a manufactory for the wholesale production of autographs, and historical documents, and manuscript poems has for some time existed at Edinburgh, and the operators have latterly flooded the market with "relics" of all sorts and varieties. This game has been stopped by the detection and exposure of the fraud, principally through a discovery made by Mr. Stronach, one of the librarians of the Advocates' Library. A few months ago a "collector," whose previous sales of "invaluable relics" of departed celebrities had attracted considerable attention, had the effrontery to print copies of two autograph poems, by Burns, of which he pretended to possess the originals, which he declared had been in his own possession for some thirty years, and which had never before been published. Unluckily, Mr. Stronach, whose suspicions had been previously aroused on the subject of Burns's relics, bethought himself of the *London Magazine*, a celebrated periodical of the last century, and, having searched through the volumes, he found these same verses printed in one of the numbers for 1766, when Burns was a child in his seventh year. The "collector" has been requested to submit his various manuscripts and autographs for the inspection of the experts attached to the British Museum, the Bodleian, or the Advocates' Library, but he has peremptorily refused to do so. Several of the principal antiquarian booksellers have unluckily become involved in these discreditable transactions—unconsciously, of course—and the discoveries which have been made are likely to utterly destroy the trade in autographs and literary relics for many years to come.

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## CUMNOCK.

## THE ALLEGED BURNS AND OTHER SPURIOUS MSS.

WHEN, in the month of August last, we received for inspection a manuscript letter which purported to have been written by the poet Burns to a certain John Hill of this town, which had not yet been published, and inserted a copy thereof in our columns, we were pretty sure—and, indeed, said then to several persons—that it was certain to cause a great stir in literary and antiquarian circles, and this it has done even to a far greater degree, and with vastly more important results than we even then anticipated.

The appearance of the letter led to a lively correspondence and controversy in our columns, the interest of which was heightened by the subsequent appearance, also in our columns, of two poems (the MSS. of which we had likewise seen), also alleged to be hitherto unpublished poems of Burns, and to be in his handwriting. All these we received from Mr James Mackenzie of Edinburgh, an F.S.A. of Scotland, a gentleman of high character and great intelligence, and who, because of his taste for antiquarian research and large experience, at least as an amateur expert in handwriting, we thought an excellent authority, and so felt easily inclined to believe in the genuineness of the MSS., especially when his opinion was confidently backed up by that of Mr James Stillie, one of the oldest and most highly respected booksellers in Edinburgh, and of still larger and longer experience as a collector of MSS. Their opinion, however, was very ably and most confidently controverted by Mr W. C. Angus of Glasgow, a gentleman also of high reputation and of great knowledge in everything connected with the poet Burns; and also by Mr Colvill-Smith, hailing from the other side of the Border, a gentleman of whom we know nothing, however, save that he wrote cleverly, though much more acrimoniously than the other. Although, at first, they had not seen any of the MSS., they confidently pronounced them spurious; nor could they, or did they, believe that Burns ever wrote such slovenly prose as the "John Hill Letter," or such weak poetry as the "Lines to a Rosebud," or "The Poor Man's Prayer."

Though quite convinced now that Burns wrote neither, yet they err who would always have us believe that, at all times, he wrote with the strength, perfection, and beauty of an archangel. Nobody denies that Burns is the author of such doggerel as this in the postscript to the "Epistle to William Samson"

"My memory's no worth a preen;  
I had amaisht forgotten clean,  
Ye bade me write you what they mean  
By this New-Light  
'Bout which our herds sae aft hae been  
Maist like to fight."

Now, therefore, if the inferiority and feebleness of the poetry of both "The Rosebud" and "The Poor Man's Prayer" had been the *only* grounds for concluding that Burns was not the author, such would have gone for very little. Not that Burns was not generally transcendently great and altogether matchless in his songs, although as in his epitaphs, his poetry is not better than that of the two spurious pieces named.

The literary world is very much indebted to us for first inserting the now notorious "John Hill letter," which first drew the attention of clever and determined men like Messrs Angus and Colvill-Smith to the matter. It is also indebted to us for closing the correspondence on the subject in our columns, which was the means of causing the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* to open fire on the forgeries and the forger—whoever he may ultimately be found to be—in a way and with material at its command, which we could never have had, and which has laid not only the literary and antiquarian circles in this country, but in every English speaking land under a deep debt of obligation to it.

A. B. Todd

ten o'clock  
Scott

Scott





# THE MSS. FORGERIES.

## THE FERRIERS.

LETTER FROM MR MACGILLIVRAY, W.S.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

December 8, 1892.

SIR,—Will you allow me to correct a slight inaccuracy in my letter to you of 2d inst? I see I mentioned that the late T. H. Ferrier, W.S., was at one time agent for the Duke of Argyll, while I ought to have said that his grandfather, James Ferrier, who died in 1829, had been agent for the then Duke. On his death, if not previously, the agency had been transferred to another firm.

The Argyll boxes of papers which were delivered to my firm five years ago by the late T. H. Ferrier's trustee had remained in possession of James Ferrier's sons, John and Walter, who succeeded him, and of their successor, the late T. H. Ferrier, for sixty years after they ought to have been in the possession of their owner.

James Ferrier and his sons were men of good connection, and had long acted as law agents for several of the best families in Scotland, probably retaining in other cases, as well as in that of the Duke of Argyll, family papers after their connection with the families had ceased; and this, of course, afforded an excellent opportunity for very plausible stories in accounting for the origin of the pretended ancient MSS.

## MR BRYCE.

I feel that I ought to mention an incident with reference to Mr Bryce, which I experienced in the course of my inquiries five years ago.

Mr Brown told me that Mr Bryce had purchased a considerable quantity of the ancient Ferrier MSS. from him, and I thought it right to call on Mr Bryce with the view of ascertaining whether any of them were Argyll papers. I found that he was then in the belief that all the papers which he had acquired were genuine, but he appeared to be uncertain whether any of them were Argyll papers or not. I saw him again on the subject soon after, when he told me that he had returned them all to Mr Brown, and that Mr Brown had refunded the price he had paid for them.

From what Mr Bryce said to me I think it was more from an honourable feeling that he ought not to retain papers which properly belonged to the families for whom the Ferriers had acted, than from any serious doubts as to their genuineness which led to his returning them to Mr Brown, although he appeared to have some discomfort with regard to the question of their genuineness, which had by that time been raised.

## "SCOTS WHA HAE."

It has been a great satisfaction to me to learn that this MS. is genuine.

From what I know of Mr Quaritch I am quite certain that he would not knowingly be a party to a transaction with reference to any ancient MS. which was not genuine; and it would have been a very serious matter if he, with his wide and long experience (he is not now far behind Mr Stillie in age, although still in full vigour of intellect), aided by Mr Kerney, his accomplished expert, whom he described to me as "the most learned man in Europe in ancient MSS., and at the same time the most modest," had made a mistake in judgment with regard to "Scots Wha Hae."

The result would have been very serious not only to himself, with all his splendid and valuable collection, but to all possessors of ancient MSS. It would have given rise to doubts and discomforts which would not easily have been allayed.—I am, &c.

WM. MACGILLIVRAY.

# CATALOGUE OF SPURIOUS BURNS DOCUMENTS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

Schoolhouse, Kilmaurs, Kilmarnock.

SIR,—That the executive of the Burns Federation in Kilmarnock have not taken a prominent part in the discussion at present proceeding in your columns is not because they feel little interest in the matter, but because they have resolved to relate what they do happen to know of it in the approaching issue of the "Burns Chronicle." Long before the subject was brought before the public it was perfectly familiar to them in all its ramifications, and it is not too much to say that but for their prompt and energetic action the game would not have been so early set afoot. What is wanted now is not so much a catalogue of genuine Burns MSS., as a list, more or less complete, of the spurious documents which have been set afloat of late. The former will, I am convinced, take care of itself in view of the proposed Glasgow Exhibition. I therefore respectfully request the co-operation of all true admirers of the bard in drawing up the list indicated for publication in the "Chronicle" of January 1893. The printing of the sheets of that periodical is already well advanced, so that all matter, to secure insertion, must be in my hands within ten days from this date. Where anonymity is desired, the request will be rigidly observed, whatever be the nature of the documents forwarded to me.—I am, &c.

D. M'NAUGHT,

Editor, "Burns Chronicle."

# CHRONOLOGICAL TEST OF THE KENNEDY MSS.

The public are further indebted to Mr H. F. Morland Simpson, F.S.A. Scot., for the following additional notes on three more of the "Historical MSS." in the published list of the Kennedy Collection. There could be no more satisfactory test than the chronological one, and it may be hoped that it will be applied to many of the Queen Mary, Jacobite, and other documents. In the meantime we have to thank Mr Morland Simpson for the following:—

General Dalyell—Letter to the Earl of Balcarres, Camp, 22d November 1666, urging him to send reinforcements, as the Rebels (the Covenanters) were in great strength among the hills near Lanark.

"Camp" is suspiciously vague; so is "hills near Lanark." On November 22d the rebels were still a long way from Lanark, which they did not reach till the 24th, marching from Colton to Ochiltree on the 22d, to Cumnock on 23d, to Douglas, their first halt in Lanarkshire, by Muirkirk, on 24th. On the 22d the king's forces marched from Glasgow to Kilmarnock. As Kilmarnock is only some ten miles from Ochiltree, Dalyell, to write such a dispatch, was shockingly badly informed. Why send to Balcarres? Balcarres was not sworn a member of the Council till March 1680 (Wodrow's Hist.) The dates above are from the Memoirs of Turner, then a prisoner with the rebels.

Oliver Cromwell—Passport authorising Captain Robert Falconer to go with six men from Camp to York, 10th September 1650. Countersigned by General George Monck.

"Camp" again! Who was "Captain Robert Falconer"? Oliver was then in Edinburgh, besieging the Castle, and did not begin his march for Stirling till the 14th. "General George Monck" was only a "Colonel" in Oliver's letter dated Edinburgh, 18th December 1650, and again in letter dated Edinburgh, March 24th, 1650—namely, 1651 (Civil year.) He was not made Lieut.-General of Ordnance till about April 1651. (Carlyle's Letters, II. 269. Ed. 1857.)

H. F. MORLAND SIMPSON.

## MORE LIGHT.

For another long and damning array of facts, brought out by the chronological test, the public are further indebted to-day to "J. A.," who writes to us as follows (and we thank him for his letter):—

December 8, 1892.







SIR.—Some time ago, in one of your issues I noticed a list of documents, some of which struck me as peculiar in their wording if they were genuinely historical. I meant to have written a word or two, but have been much occupied. It appears they were a list of documents bought by a Mr Kennedy for the Lenox Library in New York. Yesterday you give another list, which seems worthy of notice. I have had several years' experience of all kinds of old MSS. both here (University) and elsewhere, but I think even a tyro in Scottish history may well query the following:—

What does the "League of Durrus" mean?

How does Graham of Claverhouse come to be flourishing in 1689? 1689 is probably meant; but the expression, "The Leaguer, near Dundie," is suspicious.

A Warrant by Queen Mary (in French) to James Chapman, January 1562.

This is said to be countersigned by the "Regent Moray," who was not Regent till 1567.

Moreover, it was not usual to countersign Scotch documents.

James VI. Form of Prayer, &c. *Frae* Falkland Nox Novembria xx. 1599. Prince Regent of Scotland.

"*Frae*" Falkland is not a usual expression. "From our palace of," &c., would be more likely. And there was then no Prince Regent.

Charles I. Commission, York, 7 September 1640.

In this writ "David" Earl of Montrose may be a slip, but how is it countersigned by "Melfort," who was Scottish Secretary in the reign of James II., forty-five years later, and was not created till about 1685?

Marie R. Queen of Scots Warrant to John Earl of Marr, 14 December 1561.

John Earl of Mar was only created such in 1565, and is only known as Lord Erskine previous to that date.

There are other documents among those so-called Historical ones which are suspicious in their wording, but I cannot pronounce without seeing the originals. The remarks now made may lead to further investigation of the papers themselves.

I make no comment on the Burns and other letters, as I do not know the subject, and have not seen any of the spurious Burns MSS. It is about three years ago that a small packet of Jacobite papers were put into my hands. They came from a respectable bookseller, and I was asked their value. A few minutes' examination enabled me to pronounce them forgeries. They were of the date 1715. The peculiarity of the paper and handwriting struck me, and enabled me some time later to reject a packet of Scott letters brought for my inspection.

I may add that at the Naval and Military Exhibition of 1889 I noticed a large number of so-called Jacobite papers displayed. Apart from my knowledge of the persons mentioned and their signatures, I detected that they were of the same class as those I had formerly seen. I spoke to the secretary about them, but she probably did not clearly understand the subject.

Refreshing my memory by a glance at the catalogue,

I see that those I mentally labelled as spurious belonged chiefly to the "Bryce" and "Mackenzie" collections. They were of the dates of 1745 or 1715. Indeed, so far as my memory serves, nearly all the Jacobite papers in these two collections were spurious. A letter from the Earl of Errol, 1709, printed in full in the catalogue, the so-called "Jacobite Curse," the Order by the Earl of Mar, and Proclamation by James VIII. were all, I believe, spurious. Even to a person unversed in MS. lore it must have seemed odd to have two writs, one issuing from the Rebels and the other from the Duke of Cumberland, both written by the same hand. The other spurious writs I saw I cannot, at this period of time, condescend upon.

You have the thanks of every one who, like myself, has much to do with Historical and other MSS.—I am, &c. J. A.

I enclose my card, for private reference only.

#### FORGOTTEN BURNS LETTERS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

Edinburgh, December 8, 1892.

SIR,—About ten years ago a client of Messrs Hope, Mann, & Kirk died, leaving the residue of his or her

estate to the Royal Infirmary. Among that residue were three original letters, large quarto size, bearing, I think, the postmarks of the time, written by the poet Burns to an acquaintance. The letters were shown to me by my friend Mr William Mann, the senior partner of the firm of Hope, Mann, & Kirk, W.S. Mr Mann, who is a great admirer of Burns, exhibited and read them to the members of a Masonic Lodge, of which he and I are members.

I forget the contents of the letters, except that one of them dealt with the question of marriage, and that the poet recommended his correspondent to marry, saying that it was the "best and cheapest" mode! The late Councillor Crichton was a great admirer of Burns, and on being elected president of the Edinburgh Burns Club I thought it would be interesting to the club were he to read these letters at its annual gathering, and I called on Mr Mann in the hope of getting the loan of the letters for that purpose. Mr Mann, however, explained that the three letters had been handed over by him to the Royal Infirmary on the winding up of the estate of his client.

I have no doubt that these letters are lying unthought of in the repositories of the Infirmary and could be easily discovered. I regret that I am unable to give the name of the testator, but Mr Trainer, the treasurer of the Infirmary, should have no difficulty in tracing the estate to which I refer. They were unpublished, and, as their genuineness is unimpeachable, I would suggest to some of the devotees of the poet that inquiry should be made after them.—I am, &c. S.S.C.

The above letter reached us this morning, and, singularly enough, on turning to the correspondence column in the *Scotsman* we find the subjoined inquiry regarding a missing letter which appears to bear some resemblance to the one specially mentioned by "S.S.C." It would be curious to discover if there is any identity between them. The letter in the *Scotsman* is as follows:—

Elmwood, Moffat.

SIR,—While a fierce light is beating on the bogus manuscripts of Burns, I think the time opportune to direct public attention to a genuine letter of the poet that disappeared about thirty years ago, and, so far as I am aware, has never since been produced or published. The circumstances are as follows:—Mr Beugo, of Edinburgh, who engraved the Naismith portrait of Burns, was an intimate friend and occasional correspondent of the poet. When he died he left two letters he had received from Burns to his daughter, Mrs Scott. One of these letters, dated September 9th, 1788, and written from Ellisland, is published with the other letters in most of the editions of his works. The other letter, Mrs Scott (my aunt) informed me, was lent to someone whose extreme ideas of *meum* and *tuum* were hazy, and never returned. That letter, she informed me, contained a reference of his approaching marriage, and after giving several reasons for the important steps, he characteristically summed up with, "besides it will be cheaper, too."

This is the letter I wish to unearth. Perhaps some one or other of your correspondents will be able to throw some light upon it.—I am, &c. M.

#### THE FORGER AND HIS PREY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

Edinburgh, December 8, 1892.

SIR,—The result of your exhaustive investigation is a remarkable testimony to the power of the press in revealing dishonest and nefarious transactions, and thereby effectually putting a stop to them. For the sake of his petty gains the forger has succeeded in harassing professional and business men all over the world. They are not the only sufferers from the practices you are so successfully combating. In the course of their labours opinions are asked by those not able to judge, and thus valuable time is wasted which might be saved if the forger were "stamped out." His occupation causes injury to (1) the historian, who finds occurrences minutely detailed which cannot possibly have happened, as Mr Simpson very sagaciously shows to-day. (2) The antiquary, who delights to preserve the relics of departed genius and is astonished to find a favourite author writing in a style very creditable







to Simon Hedge, labourer, but scarcely worthy of the Bard of Scotia. (3) The expert in handwriting has placed before him a document which to his practised eye bears fraud written legibly. He is perhaps informed that £20 has been paid for that which he is compelled to say is not worth a brass farthing. (4) The auctioneer, to whom a good name is better than riches, finds that articles which he knows to be undoubtedly genuine are eyed suspiciously and perhaps sold for "an old song," simply because the forger has poisoned the minds of the public; vendor, auctioneer, and buyer are thus victimised. (5) The dealer (whether it be in books with autographs, MSS., pictures, or furniture), who is expected to discriminate the true from the false, has often to suffer for the deeds of those who are not so honest as himself. If honesty were as universal as it ought to be, the forger would speedily find his occupation gone, and that for ever. (6) The veteran bookseller has his unblemished record tarnished through unwittingly vending bogus articles which he has been tempted to purchase from those who should have pitied old age, and refrained from finding a dupe in an octogenarian. (7) The relatives of lawyers of honoured repute have reason to feel indignant at the treatment of the departed, whose names are dragged into an unenviable notoriety by no fault of their own. (8) The man of taste, who simply collects for his own pleasure, judging all men to be as honourable as himself, is induced to buy, often at a high price, articles which may prove to be worthless. They may be exhibited or circulated in *fac-simile* in good faith, but how chagrined must the owners be on discovering that their "gold is turned into lead."

For the sake of these and others, I trust that every effort will continue to be made in furthering the cause of justice. The incalculable injury done to literature and commerce by these forgeries demands the help of all sorts and conditions of honest men in seeing the whole truth brought to light. It will not be creditable to Scotland if her children cease now to defend the right. I am glad to notice from your columns that many have come forward to help you in this "cleaning of the Augean stable." Let us hope that it will be effectually accomplished. It is quite apparent that the apathy shown during the last two years by the dupes has enabled the manufacture of forgeries to flourish in a way which must have caused the concoctors of these precious (?) documents to "laugh in their sleeve" at the simplicity of such silent "friends."

Has any expert examined the collection of MSS. in the Burns' Monument at Kilmarnock? When and where were they acquired, and what is their pedigree? I am pleased to see that Mr Muir is taking up the work I suggested of making a list of the genuine Burns MSS. A visit to our monument to Burns at the Calton Hill would not be amiss. The relics there are indisputably authentic.

Just a hint to "Viator" (Glasgow.) If he should write again let him choose a pseudonym not already in use.—I am, &c.

VIATOR.





## Glasgow Weekly Herald

SATURDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 10.

A LAW CLERK, known as "Antique" Smith, passed the bar of the Edinburgh Police Court on a charge of uttering forged MSS.

### BURNS AND THE EXCISE.

It has been asked whether the so-called "downward course" of the poet Burns during his latter years was due to the knowledge that his prospects of further promotion in the Excise were blasted on account of his having offended the Excise Board by his political opinions, or otherwise. This question has been frequently put. An affirmative reply having again been given in an article in a Civil Service paper, Mr R. W. Macfadzean, of Greenock, has written a letter giving important particulars concerning the poet's career as an Excise officer, and, as his information is derived apparently from official sources, a summary of his letter will to all lovers of Burns be interesting reading. About 35 years since Mr Macfadzean's father, who a few years ago retired from the collectorship of Inland Revenue, Glasgow, was engaged, it appears, at Somerset House in the removal of old stores to a new wing, when he discovered among the books of the Scotch Board several in which the name of the poet Burns appeared. There were five pages in different books that contained his name, and these were—(1) a scheme of Dumfries district, in which the poet's name appeared in three different stations; (2) a list of persons recommended for promotion to the rank of supervisor, which contained the poet's name; (3) a similar list of later date, where, opposite the poet's name, there appeared the entry "dead;" (4) a page letter B from the alphabetical register in which the official character of the officers were recorded at the head office. Burns's character was given as "never tried—a poet," with a subsequent interlineation of "turns out well." (5) A page letter B, from the similar register compiled three years later. His character then was noted as "the poet—does pretty well." From an inspection of the various characters it was evident to Mr Macfadzean that they were given with great candour, and he considered that of Burns to be above the average. Probably the most important book found was the "register of censures," embracing the whole period of the poet's service. It appeared to be a faithful record of everything of the kind issued by the Board, from cautions for trifling irregularities to dismissals. This volume was carefully inspected by Mr Macfadzean, and, as all lovers of the poet will be glad to hear, Burns's name did not appear in any part of it. From inquiries recently instituted it would appear that these books, which bore such interesting testimony concerning the poet's official career, are no longer in existence; but it is a matter for congratulation that Mr Macfadzean made the extracts and notes referred to when the opportunity offered. Had Burns lived a little longer it appears that he would have been appointed to the supervisorship at Dunblane, as the person whose name stood next below his on the list of persons recommended for promotion became supervisor of that district early in 1797. It follows from these facts that Burns had no cause whatever to doubt that his prospects of promotion were as good as any other officer in the Excise.





## THE BOGUS MSS.

MR COLVILL-SCOTT AND MR MACKENZIE.

[FROM TO-DAY'S SCOTSMAN.]

"Arts and Letters" Club, 4 Grafton Street,  
Piccadilly, London, W., December 7, 1892.

SIR,—As I think the letter from Mr James Mackenzie, chemist, 45 Forrest Road, Edinburgh, may be calculated to do me injustice as to the details I have so far given regarding my interviews with him, I crave space for a reply to Mr Mackenzie's letter.

I am one of the gentlemen to whom he refers as having called on him at his shop regarding certain supposed Burns writings which he published in the *Cummock Express*, since reproduced in the *Dispatch*, and I can vouch for what has already been said as having taken place on my visits: that Mr Mackenzie graphically related, on my first visit, how he, as a general collector, had the opportunity of purchasing a certain cabinet or desk, and on looking over which he suddenly touched a spring—he called it an invisible spring—when a secret drawer appeared containing a bundle of poems and songs by Burns; but which, on going into the matter a little more on my second visit, had miraculously turned into Burns letters only. There is no doubt in my mind as to the veracity of this statement.

I am amused at Mr Mackenzie's reference to the *Times* case, but he may not be aware that the number of documents in that case was infinitesimal compared with the vast collection of Burns, Scott, and Rebellion documents under the charge of the authorities of the British Museum. But let us examine Mr Mackenzie's confession, premising with the remark that his continued silence regarding vital points in the discussion is certainly more liable to provoke suspicion than satisfaction. "Personally I am glad the truth has come to light." Indeed! Then why not tell all he can regarding the matter? He has been several times asked to explain from whom he procured his MSS.; why does he not do so? His hesitancy is simply unaccountable. "Statements of fact have been so much mixed with what was sensational and untrue." I challenge him to give a single instance of any of the facts of the case, as given in the *Dispatch*, to be associated with what he can prove to be "untrue." Had he been able to do so, I doubt not he would have done so long ere now; and so that argument is not likely to go down as a reason for his "not taking any notice of the matter." Mr Mackenzie was consulted early during the correspondence in the *Cummock Express*, so the excuse that he was not consulted soon enough won't do. Nothing has been made of the "cabinet story" but to give it as he gave it; not a trace of fiction has been mixed up with it. And I wish most emphatically to state that Mr Mackenzie said nothing about medical MSS., which he has introduced into this controversy for the first time. Mr Mackenzie said he had found the MSS. himself, and did not say a friend had found them. It was I that expressed my surprise that Mr Mackenzie had not mentioned the discovery, either in the shape of a paper before the illustrious Society to which I understand him to belong (it is noticeable that "F.S.A.Scot." does not appear after Mr Mackenzie's name, for the first time in this correspondence.) Who are the gentlemen "known to be authorities on Burns" to whom the MSS. had so "often been shown"? Where are they? Why don't they come forward? Then Mr Mackenzie acknowledges for the first time having disposed of certain MSS., yet calls himself at the end of his letter an "amateur"! I cannot believe that Mr Mackenzie has destroyed his collection. It is to be doubly regretted if such a very hasty action has been taken. Yes, it is much to be regretted that this exposure was not made long ago, before so many individuals had been "landed" with these base imitations of noble things.

But, so that "an amateur might be spared the scathing criticism and imputation of worse motives," it would be as well if he would come straight forward with a reasonable explanation of how he came by the MSS. and all he knows about them; and Mr Mackenzie, when his hand is in, might give like information regarding the Rillbank Crescent collection, regarding which his memory is gravely at fault. One of the remarkable features of this correspondence is that, without the help of Mr Mackenzie (who accused us of being guilty of "Jeddart justice" when, judging by

the letterpress of his "unpublished Burns MSS.," we described them as impossible), the *Dispatch*, from their internal evidence alone, has demonstrated their falsity. Thanking you, sir, in anticipation of inserting this letter—I am, &c. H. D. COLVILL-SCOTT.

### CURIOUS CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR STILLIE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place,  
London, S.W., December 8, 1892.

SIR,—As a further contribution to the letters of Mr James Stillie, I beg to enclose the following correspondence which I had the honour to have with him. I am still of the opinion that Mr Stillie's letters were not only unreasonable and should not have been addressed to me. It is necessary to mention that I received on approval from a certain individual in England some Burns MSS., which were offered to me at a very low figure. The MSS. I sent back very soon after I had received them with a curt reply intimating my wish to discontinue any further dealings with the firm in question; and I received more than one letter from the individual to whom I had returned the MSS. However, I concluded the matter ended until I received the following from Mr Stillie, in whom till then I had never taken the slightest interest:—

"19 George Street, Edinburgh, 24 June 1890.

"SIR,—A rumour has been propagated in London stating that manuscripts of Burns and Scott, &c., were being manufactured and not genuine in Edinburgh. —Being the only autograph dealer, and holding a large stock—it has injured me greatly, and in the course of investigation your name has been given me. I will take it kind if you will give me your authority for this statement.—Yours respectfully,

"JA. STILLIE."

Such was the first letter I received from Mr Stillie, and I wrote him not to send another.

Mr Stillie called himself the only autograph dealer in Edinburgh. Why, I do not know, for, I think, I had bought autographs in Edinburgh previous to that, and I have never had any dealings with Mr Stillie. He also sent me one of his catalogues, and if my memory is right on the point, it contained what appeared to be some very fine MSS. of Burns.

The following is the letter I received in answer to mine:—

"19 George Street, 1 July 1890.

"SIR,— . . . As you do not deny, or give me any information relative to my enquiry—it will be my duty to put this affair into legal hands. It was to avoid this that I wrote you. . . . But you have left no other resource, which I regret.—I am, yours respectfully,

"JA. STILLIE."

But he never carried his threat any further, and so ended a matter which he can hardly make much out of now after all that has appeared. Perhaps Mr Stillie may now be thinking of withdrawing his very peculiar remarks regarding the London dealers, through whose high business capacities a certain amount of publicity was given in a limited circle to the very large traffic going on in spurious MSS. from Edinburgh, one of whom received the following somewhat odd epistle two years ago, after being told that "this matter is too serious a business to be overlooked."

I give the letter just as it is:—

"19 George Street.

"SIR,—Old age (86) and severe weather has laid me seriously ill, and I sincerely hope that the last paragraph about Scotch papers was in error—it is just an old rumour revived.

I believe and hope that my manuscripts are are correct, but in the meantime have withdrawn them to get them certified by an eminent manuscript genealogist—which will take both time and money—In the meantime I appeal and trust to a Brother's Sympathy in this serious matter. Any relief will be esteemed and remembered.—Yours truly,

JA. STILLIE."

May I ask Mr Stillie if his large collection was

"certified," and by whom? This effusion was addressed to one of the gentlemen mentioned on the leaflet circulated by Mr Stillie headed

"MANUSCRIPTS—ENGLISH EXPERTS,"

and containing, amongst other remarks of the kind, the following:—

"These self-elected Experts, without enquiry or any evidence whatever, pronounced these letters 'palpable forgeries.' . . . And I am still suffering by this combination from their sophistry and untrustworthy assertions, and can have no claim for relief &c. &c."

" . . . I have one of the largest Collection of MSS.







Documents and Letters in Scotland; particularly Sir Walter Scott, Robert Burns, Queen Mary, Jacobite, &c. . . . Our Scottish Experts are of a different class—genealogists and connected with our Government Record and Manuscript Offices and, therefore, qualified gentlemen," &c.

I bear Mr Stillie no personal animosity, nor do I wish to do so, and I am quite aware of his great age and former illustrious connection with one of the greatest and truest men that ever stepped this earth, but I do think that Mr Stillie might have rendered material information regarding this disgraceful business of the huge forgeries of MSS., which will long remain a darkened stain upon the literary fame of modern Athens. Apologising, sir, for the length of this letter, I am, &c.

H. D. COLVILL-SCOTT.

[Mr Stillie's note of two years ago beginning "Old age (86)" has a curious resemblance to one which he sent to the *Dispatch* a few days ago, excusing his delay in making a statement. With every desire to be lenient to him, we feel it necessary to publish this correspondence.]

#### APPLICATION OF THE CHRONOLOGICAL TEST TO MORE "UNHISTORICAL" MSS.

Montrose. (James Graham) Marquis of Montrose—Two autographs, 3d November 1642.

Montrose had no authority to issue passports till his commission as Lieutenant-General to Prince Maurice, February 1, 1644. His patent as a Marquis is dated Oxford, May 6, 1644.

Oliver Cromwell. Signed Durham, 8th September 1648. Proclamation or Declaration as to the apprehension of Scotch soldiers taken prisoners at Warrington. A fine specimen.

Is this the original of the Declaration issued by Cromwell at Durham 8th, September 1648 (Commons Journals, vii. 1260, Carlyle), or did he issue two such Declarations; or three?

For another of the MSS. is as follows:—

Oliver Cromwell. Signed Durham, 8th September 1648. Proclamation as to the apprehension of Scotch Prisoners of War. The prisoners were so numerous that their guard being required for active military service, they could not restrain them. Fine specimen.

That is, the guards could not restrain the prisoners. This is clearly (a copy of ?) the Declaration quoted by Carlyle, i. 365, from the Commons Journals.

Oliver Cromwell. Signed twice. From the Camp at Pentland Hills, 14th August 1650. Order against the evil practice of the soldiery.

This declaration is appointed to be intimated at the doors of the Paroch Churches by special direction.

Here again, as far as date goes, there is some verisimilitude. C. was encamped on the Pentlands on August 14th. But what soldiery were misbehaving? Did he mean Lesly's? C. was then in a tightish corner, with Lesly on the west of Edinburgh, and had a free march only round the city to Musselburgh. **Why signed twice? Had the saintly butcher**

a premonition that he would thus enhance the value of the document? Will the owner of this and the other MSS. quoted publish their contents for further criticism?

Oliver Cromwell. Signed 14th Sept. 1650. Proclamation as to the wounded at Dunbar.

Signed where? Why eleven days after the battle? Cromwell left Edinburgh for Stirling on the 14th.

Oliver Cromwell. Signed Edinburgh, 10th December 1650. Proclamation to be proclaimed by the Marshall-General by beat of drum in Edinburgh and Leith. As to an agreement between him (Cromwell) and Colonel Walker Dundas, Governor of the Castle of Edinburgh. Fine specimen.

Is this, then, the original of the document quoted in Cromwelliana, p. 99, from the contemporary newspapers? But how is it that Colonel Walter Dundas has become Walker? —"Walker" again!

Oliver Cromwell. Order, signed Carron, near Stirling, 19th October 1650. Directed to the Commanding Officer at Glasgow, ordering him and others in authority to observe the laws against vice, immorality, and profaneness.

What officers these, and what laws? Cromwell himself entered Glasgow (by way of Kilsyth) for the first time—took it, in fact—on Friday, 18th October 1650, ministers and magistrates flying before him. He stayed there till Monday, 21st. Was this letter a supreme joke addressed to himself?

H. F. MORLAND SIMPSON.

#### MR WALLACE BRUCE'S CHRISTMAS CARD.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."] United States Consulate, York Buildings, Edinburgh.

SIR,—I take pleasure in complying with the request in yesterday's *Evening Dispatch*, and send herewith my reply, which I will be glad to have appear also in the *Scotsman*, as the article relating to my possession of the "Blue-Eyed Lassie" MS. appears in the weekly issue this morning.

In the summer of 1890 I saw the MS. in question at Mr Stillie's book-store in George Street, and purchased it of him, paying either £3 or 3 guineas for the same. It will be remembered that the Blue-Eyed Lassie (afterwards Mrs Kenwick, of New York) was a friend in her later life of Washington Irving, and that she transported a slip of Scott's favourite ivy to the porch of Irving's "Sunnyside," thus binding together by her loving act the names of Burns, Scott, and Irving. In the second edition of "In Clover and Heather," published in 1890, I was proud to insert the *fac-simile* of a MS. which seemed to me a lucky find, and I had it reduced to meet the requirements of the size of the volume, so that the *fac-simile* upon which your writer bases his judgment is hardly a fair representation of the document in question. I shall now take occasion to have it examined by experts in order to satisfy my own mind. If it should prove a forgery I must apologise to my friends for sending them, as Shakespeare might say, "a shadow's shadow."

You have termed it in your headline "An Awkward Fix." I confess that it would have been still more "awkward" if I had favoured my new found friends in Scotland with the *fac-simile* of a document brought from abroad instead of one purchased from an intelligent and respectable dealer in Edinburgh. I believe Mr Stillie was honest in regarding it as a real MS. of Burns, and, if he made a mistake, I would not put him, even if it were in my power, to any trouble or expense in the matter.

I am glad to have my MS. perish if need be in the cause of honesty, and I believe there is no punishment too severe for the literary forger.

Thanking you for your kind personal reference, I am, &c.

WALLACE BRUCE.

P.S.—I might add that I have recently been offered a "brass chandelier" from Abbotsford, but I am becoming cautious.

W. B.

#### THE KILMARNOCK MONUMENT MSS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."] Dean Cottage, Kilmarnock, December 9, 1892.

SIR,—The closing questions in the able letter of "Viator" in to-day's *Dispatch* are very pertinent. "Has any expert examined the collection of MSS. in the Burns Monument at Kilmarnock? When and where were they acquired, and what is their pedigree?"

I am not aware of the MSS. having been tested by professional experts, but the officials here will be only too glad to have them so examined now in the public interest. As to when and where they were acquired and their pedigree, all that will be found very carefully detailed in "Burns Manuscripts in Kilmarnock Museum," pages 131 to 147, published by D. Brown & Co. (successors to James M'Kie), Kilmarnock, 1889.—I am, &c.

DAVID SNEDDON,

Hon. Sec. Burns Federation.

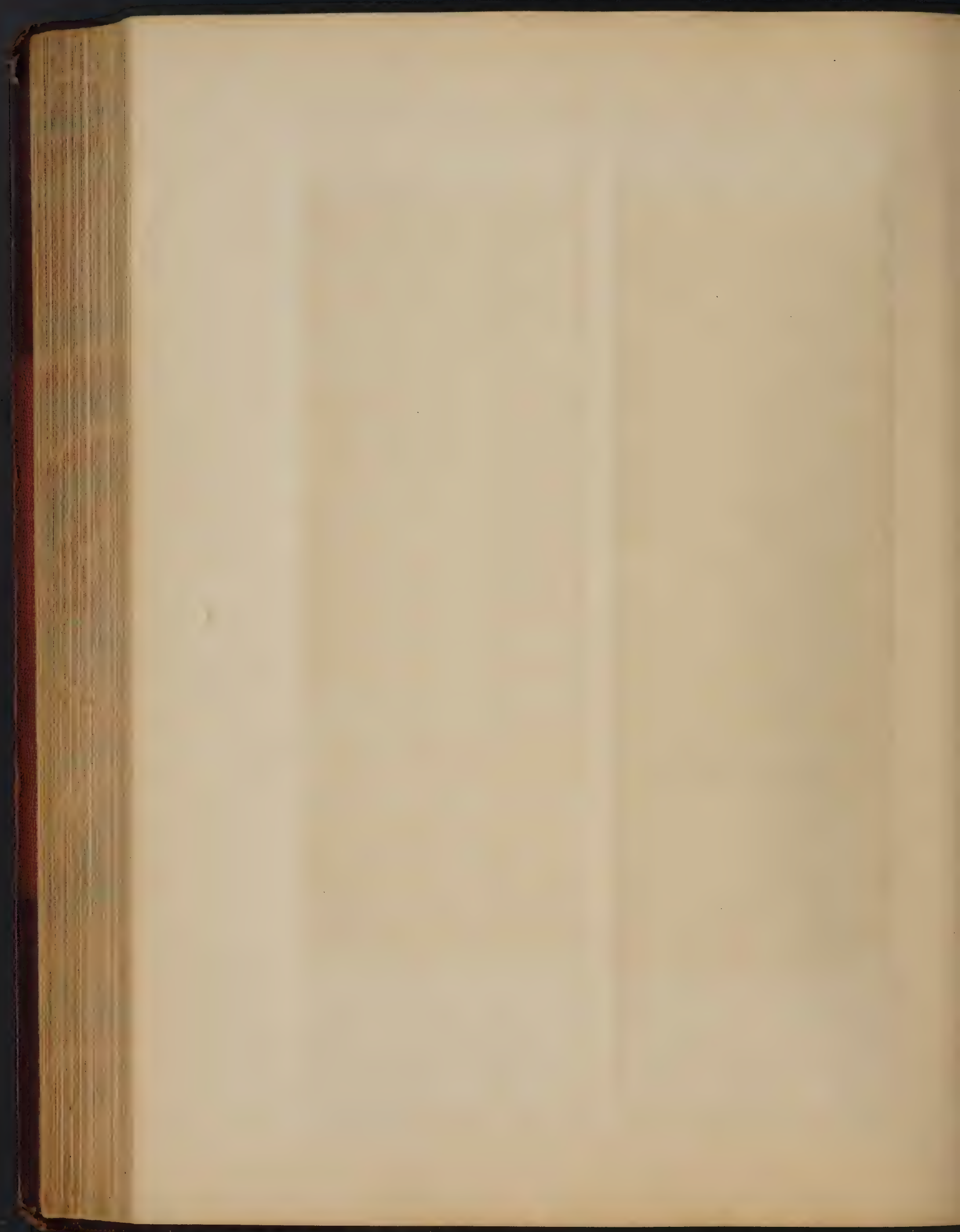
#### FAIRPLAY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."] 13 Bright's Crescent, Edinburgh, December 9, 1892.

SIR,—I beg to thank you for inserting my plea for "fairplay," and for editorial comment thereon.

If my analogy of the knights of old be not in all respects apposite, the moral conveyed is none the less clear. The knight might challenge, and even fight, *in cog.*, but all the same he had to enter the lists *in propria persona* and take equal chances with his foe. This is exactly what the anonymous knight of the pen does not do. In abstract questions it may not matter, but where personal issues are involved the combat is unequal and unfair. My plea for fairplay was simply the protest of an impartial onlooker against an unchivalrous mode of warfare which is getting far too common, and of which the letter complained of—in usurping the privileges and the very language of fair fight—appeared to be a more than usually flagrant example.







While maintaining a neutral attitude as regards the controversy itself, I cannot refuse to endorse the view you express as to Mr Mackenzie's reticence. Yet even here again some allowance may surely be made for a man who, whether he deserves it or not, has been so mercilessly "chivvied" and "baited," and who has quite enough to tackle in the censorship of the *Dispatch* (unsparing, though just) and the criticism of those who have themselves the candour—or courage—to attack him openly, without being exposed to the shafts of hidden foes. Certainly "the truth's the thing;" but neither truth nor justice will suffer from conformity to the laws of fair combat.—I am, &c.

JAS. D. WALKER.

[While we appreciate the motives of our correspondent, we may be permitted to point out that in the first article which we published on this subject Mr Mackenzie was not "mercilessly cheivied and baited." On the contrary, in the course of a plain statement of the facts we appealed to him, as a man of honour and a respected citizen, to come out of his shell and help to clear up this mystery; and when he called on the following day we personally repeated our appeal in the strongest possible terms, pointing out what delay involved; and he would not. For Mr Stillie, labouring under the infirmities of age and impaired health, we are sincerely sorry, and can excuse him; but there are others whose silence nothing can excuse. We contend, therefore, that our correspondents, whether anonymous or not, are entitled to express their opinions within fair limits regarding the silence of these gentlemen. We can give only the letters of a small proportion of those who write, and we select those who speak with most authority.]

#### EXPLANATION FROM CUMNOCK.

[FROM TO-DAY'S "CUMNOCK EXPRESS."]

When, in the month of August last, we received for inspection a manuscript letter which purported to have been written by the poet Burns to a certain John Hill, of this town, which had not yet been published, and inserted a copy thereof in our columns, we were pretty sure—and, indeed, said then to several persons—that it was certain to cause a great stir in literary and antiquarian circles, and this it has done even to a far greater degree, and with vastly more important results than we even then anticipated.

The appearance of the letter led to a lively correspondence and controversy in our columns, the interest of which was heightened by the subsequent appearance, also in our columns, of two poems (the MSS. of which we had likewise seen), also alleged to be hitherto unpublished poems of Burns, and to be in his handwriting. All these we received from Mr James Mackenzie, of Edinburgh, an F.S.A. of Scotland, a gentleman of high character and great intelligence, and who, because of his taste for antiquarian research and large experience, at least as an amateur expert in handwriting, we thought an excellent authority, and so felt easily inclined to believe in the genuineness of the MSS., especially when his opinion was confidently backed up by that of Mr James Stillie, one of the oldest and most highly respected booksellers in Edinburgh, and of still larger and longer experience as a collector of MSS. Their opinion, however, was very ably and most confidently controverted by Mr W. C. Angus, of Glasgow, a gentleman also of high reputation and of great knowledge in everything connected with the poet Burns; and also by Mr Colvill-Smith, hailing from the other side of the Border, a gentleman of whom we know nothing, however, save that he wrote cleverly, though

much more acrimoniously than the other. Although at first they had not seen any of the MSS., they confidently pronounced them spurious; nor could they, or did they, believe that Burns ever wrote such slovenly prose as the "John Hill Letter," or such weak poetry as the "Lines to a Rosebud," or "The Poor Man's Prayer."

Though quite convinced now that Burns wrote neither, yet they err who would always have us believe that, at all times, he wrote with the strength, perfection, and beauty of an archangel. Nobody denies that Burns is the author of such doggerel as this in the postscript to the "Epistle to William Samsou"—

"My memory's no worth a preen;  
I had amaist forgotten clean,  
Ye bade me write you what they mean  
By this New-Light  
'Bout which our herds sae aft ha'e been  
Maist like to fight."

Now, therefore, if the inferiority and feebleness of the poetry of both "The Rosebud" and "The Poor Man's Prayer" had been the *only* grounds for concluding that Burns was not the author, such would have gone for very little. Not that Burns was not generally transcendently great and altogether matchless in his songs, although as in his epitaphs, his poetry is not better than that of the two spurious pieces named.

The literary world is very much indebted to us for first inserting the now notorious "John Hill letter," which first drew the attention of clever and determined men like Messrs Angus and Colvill-Smith to the matter. It is also indebted to us for closing the correspondence on the subject in our columns, which was the means of causing the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* to open fire on the forgeries and the forger—whichever he may ultimately be found to be—in a way and with material at its command, which we could never have had, and which has laid not only the literary and antiquarian circles in this country, but in every English-speaking land, under a deep debt of obligation to it.

#### LORD ROSEBURY.

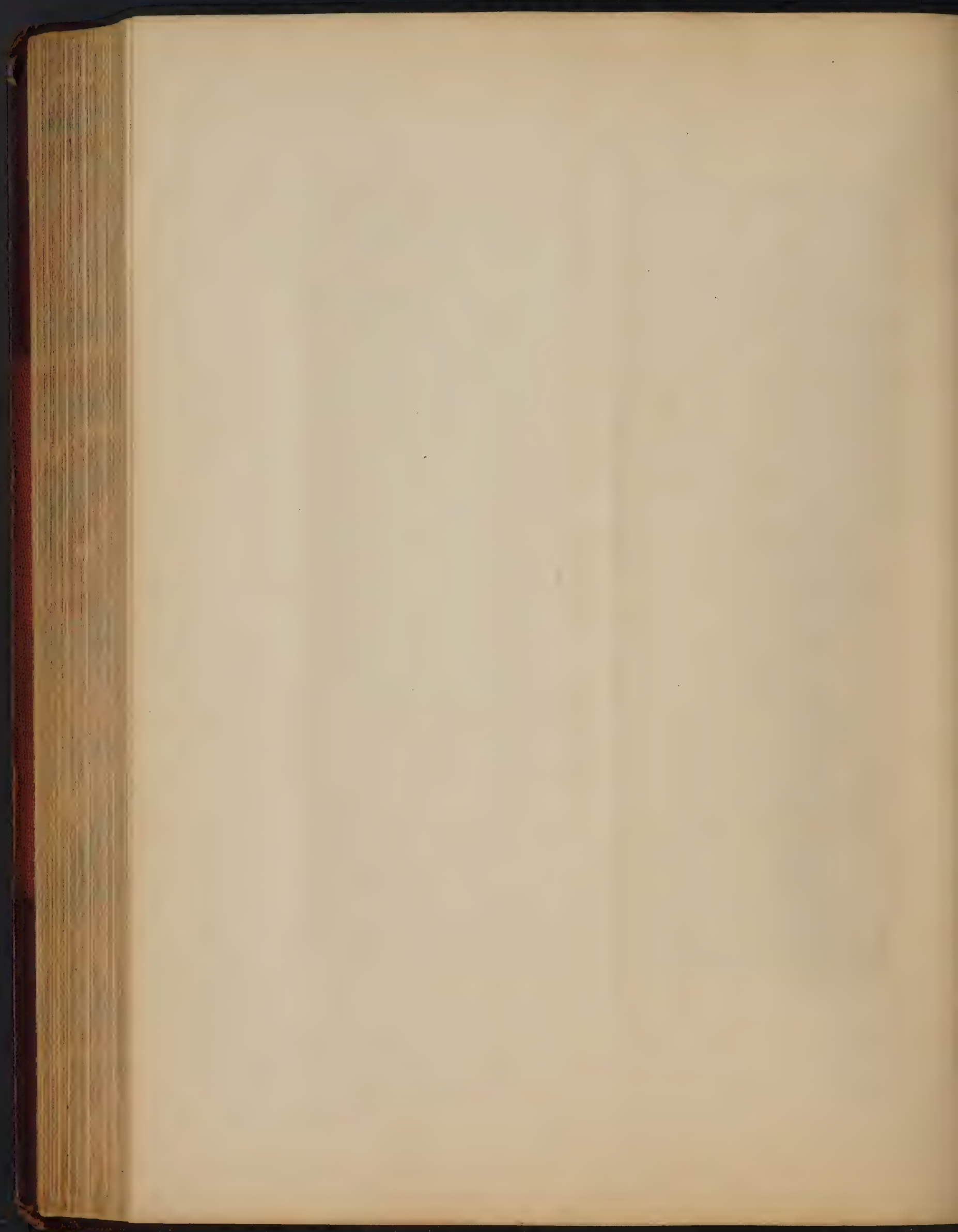
To-day's *Athenaeum* says:—Lord Rosebery has been mentioned as a victim, but it is said that as soon as his attention was drawn to the nature of his purchase, he insisted on a repayment of the money.

#### "MADE IN EDINBURGH."

Commenting on Sir Thomas Gibson's address at the presentation of bronzes to Selkirk Free Library on Saturday, the *Southern Reporter* of to-day says,—He was rather "bitten with the idea" of presenting a Burns MS. As the Mercandise Marks Act had not, however, come into operation, and as "made in Edinburgh" was not stamped on a number of them, it is fortunate for Selkirk and Sir Thomas at this moment that the idea did not "bite" very long or very persistently.

#### THE MORAL.

To-day's *Dunfermline Journal* says:—"The moral of the whole thing is that relic hunters must take care not to allow their enthusiasm to outrun their judgment. Outside the clumsiness of the forgeries the enormous piles of documents which have of late been pushed on the market ought to have aroused the suspicion of even those who had little experience in the work of old MSS. hunting. What must seem a little curious to the public is the fact that it should be left to the conductors of a newspaper to undertake the risk which is necessarily involved in the exposure of such frauds as those in question."





BURNS (8<sup>th</sup> S. ii. 387).—Horace was before Burns in the production of the idea, and perhaps your correspondent may be thinking of him :—

Navis, quæ tibi creditum  
Debes Virgilium, finibus Atticis  
Reddas incolumem, precor ;  
Et serves animæ dimidium meæ.  
Ode iii. book i.

Ah ! te meæ si partem animæ rapit  
Maturior vis, quid moror altera,  
Nec carus æquus, nec superstes  
Integer ?

Ode xvii. book ii.

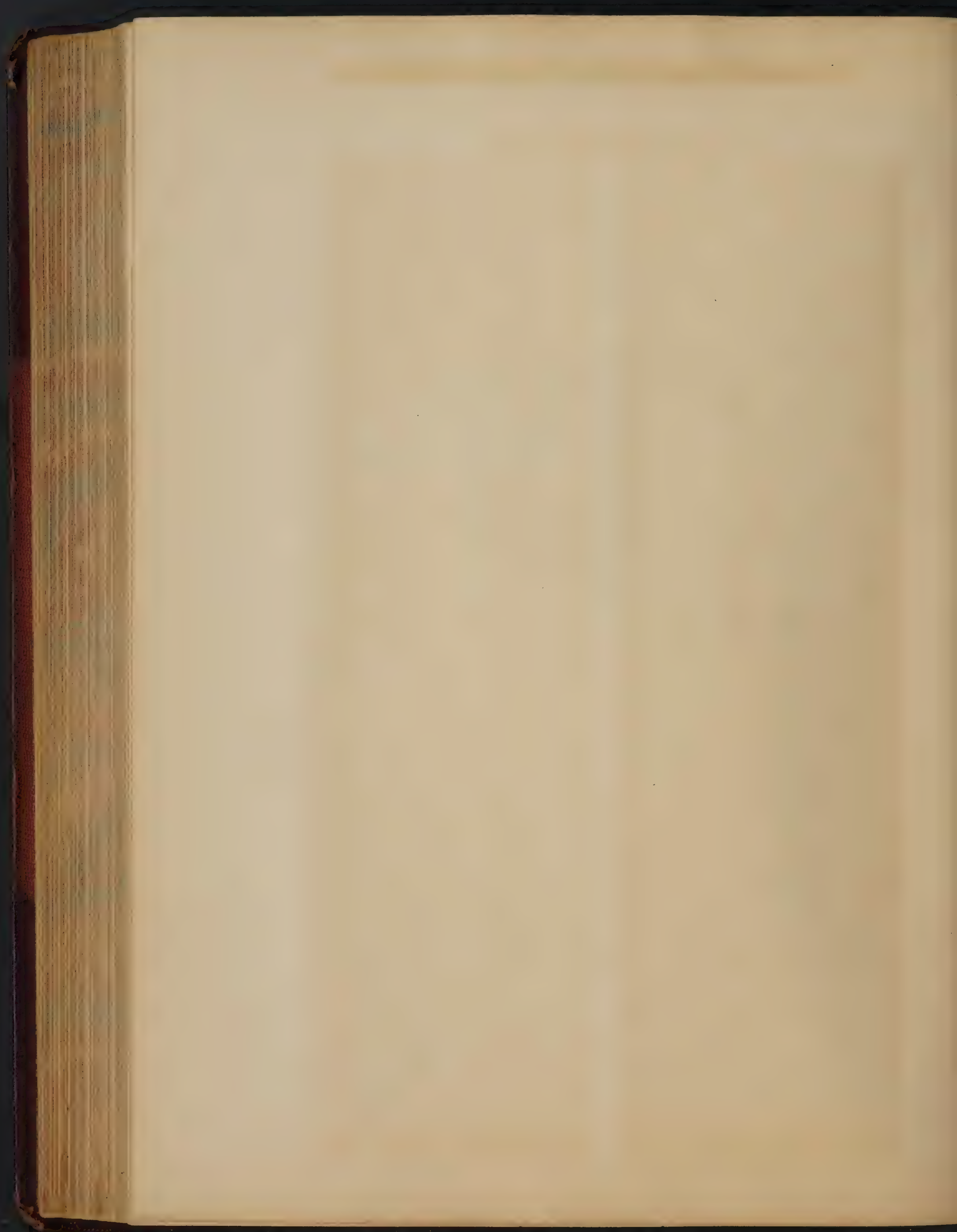
E. YARDLEY.

I cannot say if Burns is the author of "It is another part of ourselves gone when we lose a friend." But I would refer CLAYMORE to the first notice in Latin to that effect which I have ever come across, Horace, Car. ii. Ode xvii. l. 5 :—

Ah ! te meæ si partem animæ rapit  
Maturior vis.

WM. GRAHAM F. PIGOTT.

\* H. O. S.





We publish some additional letters about the Bogus MSS.

## THE BOGUS MSS.

### THE "EXPLANATION FROM CUMNOCK."

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH,"]

Glasgow, December 10, 1892.

SIR,—Nothing but a good conscience can be troubling the editor of the *Cumnock Express*. Since you pointed his mistake—for mistake it was—in closing the correspondence, he has been anything but happy. To those who have followed this correspondence it must be evident that we had Richard Cobden's three necessary conditions to success—(1) a good cause; (2) a persevering advocate (which we undoubtedly had in Mr Colvill-Scott); and (3) the opposition of the *Cumnock Express*. The editor not only committed himself to the genuineness of Mr Mackenzie's MSS.; but, at his suggestion (in a grossly unfair letter), he closed the correspondence without allowing us to reply; and to-day he inserts in his paper Mr Mackenzie's "confession" to the *Scotsman*, without my reply. But to his statement. Relying, he says, on Mr Mackenzie's "authority," we "felt easily inclined to believe in the genuineness of the MSS., especially when his opinion was confidently backed up by that of Mr James Stillie." Not so fast. Mr Stillie's endorsement did not appear till October 21st. The editor gave himself away (September 9th) in the following foot-note:—

"We have been favoured with a sight of the MS. of the foregoing poem [the *Rosebud*], and after the closest and most careful inspection, and comparing it with the acknowledged and undoubted handwriting of the poet, we are forced to conclude that if its genuineness is doubted or denied, then such may be the fate of every scrap of the Robert Burns MSS. in existence.—Ed. *Cumnock Express*."

There is no reference here to any opinion or authority whatever. An unqualified judgment is given on the document itself, which, like the John Hill letter, is pronounced to have "every mark of genuineness." If the editor had taken up a neutral position in the matter, he would not have created the prejudice that unhappily exists among his own clientele against us, and he would have been saved the indignity of having to say, which he does in a roundabout way, that he was not only mistaken as to the handwriting of the poet, but that he thought it possible for Burns to write a prose letter and seven verses without conveying a single line or phrase that would put their authorship beyond dispute. The quotation which he dubs "doggerel," from the postscript of the letter to "Winsome Willie," has the ring of Burns about it. There is no similitude between the ring of this and the colourless note that pervades the "*Rosebud*." Anyhow, the "Samson Epistle" is outside the controversy. I said not one word about "slovenly" writing. What I said was that, "like the John Hill letter, the song lacks the stamp of the master;" and the editor, in seeking an easy fall, makes it upon a weakness he imputes to me. He very grudgingly admits that we have been right from the beginning. I shall be more generous, and frankly admit that he has been splendidly wrong, and wrong with ample opportunity for forming a judgment—wrong as to the handwriting of the poet, and wrong as to the authorship of the matter attributed to him, and wrong, too, in not helping us to incite Mr Mackenzie to continue the publication of his stock of bogus MSS. If the tap had been allowed to drip, the probability is that the *Dispatch* would have had a wider field of inquiry than is now possible. The *Cumnock Express* does not seem to know where its own good offices come in. We owe, and we render them ungrudgingly, deep and lasting thanks to the *Express*, not for having closed the controversy, but for having published Mr Mackenzie's MSS., and my first letter, which led to establishing the identity of Mr James Mackenzie, F.S.A. Scot., chemist, 45 Forrest Road, Edinburgh, with Mr James Mackenzie, 2 Rillbank Crescent, about whom there hung a mystery, and who sent to public sale a quantity of spurious Burns MSS.; and in particular we have to thank the *Express* for having published Mr Mackenzie's explanation of why said MSS. were allowed to pass from his collection for what was virtually an old song. I knew, said Mr Mackenzie, that the MSS. were "perfectly genuine, that they were not warranted, was for a

purpose (the italics are his own), which proved that some who pretend to be judges of such were not so.

One of the evil effects of the *Cumnock Express*, or rather of the *Ayr Observer* (which has great influence in Ayr—the letters ran through both papers), having taken the side of Mr Mackenzie—(which was virtually the side of the forger—whoever he may be—his dupes and accomplices)—was to create a sentiment in Ayr in favour of the genuineness of the spurious MS. which Mr Mackenzie presented to the Carnegie Library, and against those who were initiating this inquiry. That that MS. has been condemned by most competent and impartial judges there can be no manner of doubt. But those in Ayr who ought to have assisted in bringing the fraud home to the author of it are sulking in their clubs, and complaining that the matter has been made public in the *Dispatch*. What is Ayr going to do with the MS.? is being asked on all hands; and it is matter of regret that we have had to wait so long for an answer. Having no wish that Ayr should suffer in the matter, I have made two proposals as to the compensation Mr Mackenzie, were he so minded, might make; and I take the opportunity of publicly thanking a gentleman who has promised ten guineas if Mr Mackenzie will come to the scratch.

A word as to Mr Jas. D. Walker, whose argument as to "hidden foes" cuts two ways. There are two causes involved in this controversy—the cause of the author of the MSS. and his accomplices; and the cause of their dupes, and the public, who have been outraged by their acts. If there is to be no anonymity on one side, there should be none on the other. Both sides, particularly Mr Mackenzie, have had recourse to it. Why does he not name the authorities he has paraded in this controversy in favour of the genuineness of his MSS.; and why should Mr Walker, who, in Burns phrase, has shown himself to be an adroit "Gretna Green matchmaker between vowels and consonants," confine his strictures to one side only?—I am, &c. W. C. ANGUS.

## MORE UNHISTORICAL MSS.

### THE CHRONOLOGICAL TEST APPLIED.

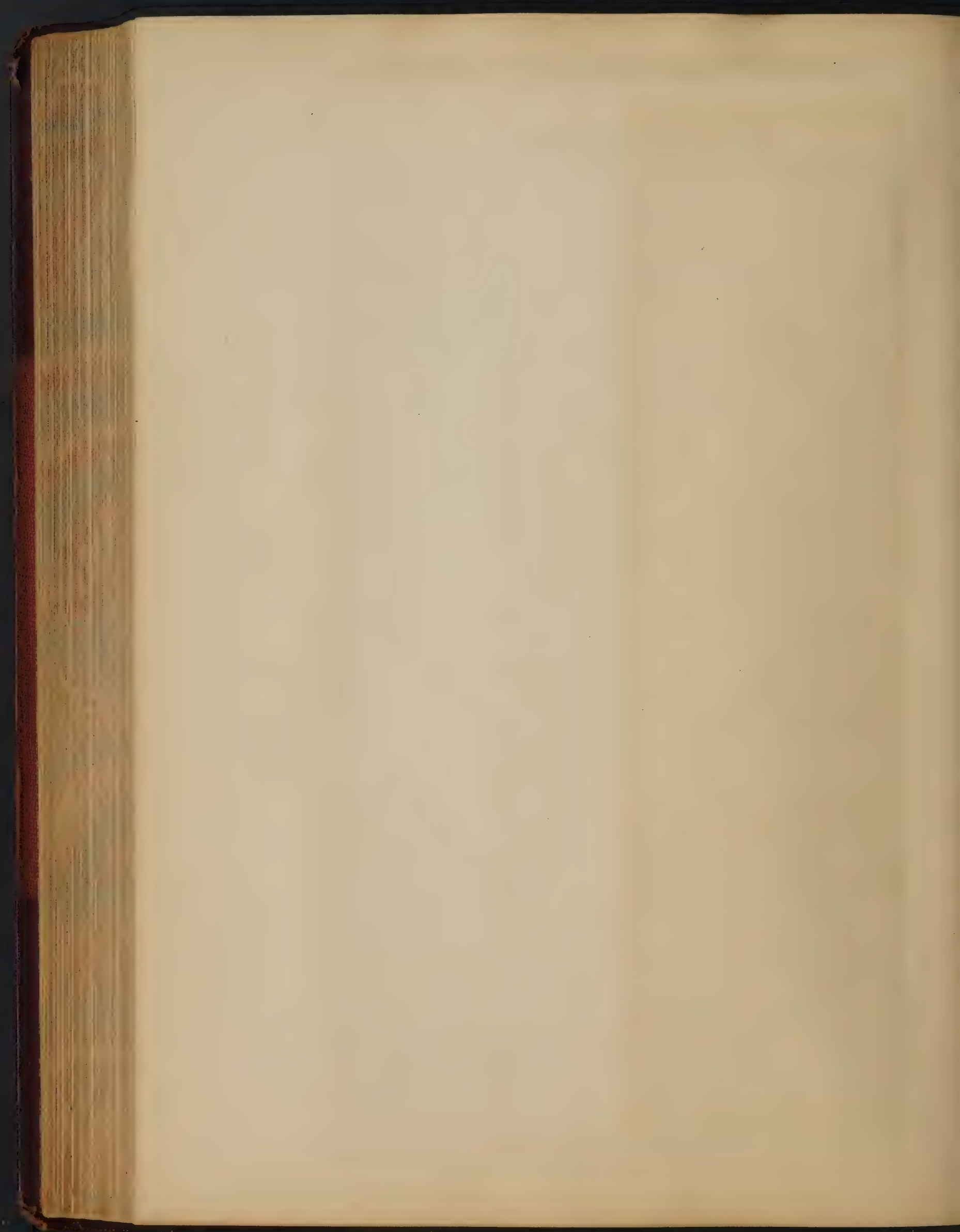
1. MANIFESTO, or Declaration of War by the Covenanters, Lanark, 29th November 1666. Signed by Richard Cameron and many others.

The Covenanters *did* draw up a document, and probably at Lanark, where they were on November 25th. Wodrow, who gives the text from a copy, says it was *undated*, and no place seems to have been mentioned. But on Monday the 26th they left Lanark, which Dalryell entered that same afternoon, and on the 28th the rebels were completely dispersed at Rullion Green. It would be interesting to hear the names of the "many others" with whom the forger has made free; but let Richard Cameron suffice. Clearly we are meant to assume that this was the notorious field-preacher, surprised and killed by Earlshall's troopers at Ayr-wood, July 20th, 1680. Had he been out in the "Pentland rising," we should certainly have heard of it from Wodrow, Peden, Walker, and the other martyr-mongers. Sir W. Turner, who gives far the most complete account of the rising, being their prisoner all the while, mentions many names, but not R. Cameron's. The latter was born at Falkland, in Fife, where he was at one time schoolmaster and precentor in the Episcopal Church. The year of his birth does not appear. Can any correspondent who knows the records of that parish tell us? Cameron did not come into prominence till 1677, when he was a probationer for the ministry. In 1686, therefore, he was probably a mere bit laddie. A fine signature to head their list!

2. Covenanters.—Declaration and Testimony of the True Presbyterian, Anti-Frelatick, Anti-Erastian persecuted party in Scotland, first subscribed at Sanquhar 22d June 1680, and now again at Carstairs this 14th day of August 1680. Signed by Richard Cameron, R. Balfour, and numerous others.

How inviting to some we know of! The Sanquhar date (or *bait*) is right enough. Unhappily the hand with which Cameron signed this on 14th August 1680, or his head for certain, adorned the Netherbow of Edinburgh at that day, by decree of July 29th.







(See No. 1 above.) Who was "R. Balfour"?

I may be allowed to remark that it is a libel on the Covenanters to describe as a document of theirs a treasonable paper in which the signers of it "were alone, and had none of all the Presbyterian ministers in Scotland approving them, as themselves acknowledge and regret." (Wodrow, III., c. iv. 213.)

3. Covenanters.—Mutual Bond of Union, Symington, 29th May 1679. In Defence, signed before the Battle of Rullion Green. With numerous signatures. Posthumous signatures, no doubt. (See No. 1.)

Or were there two battles at Rullion Green?

4. Letter, signed Kinloch, 3d March 1670, by John Balfour of Kinloch Barley, the great Covenanter, to a Nobleman (one of the murderers of Archbishop Sharpe of St Andrews, 1679.)

(That is, Balfour, not the nobleman, murdered Sharpe.) The murderer of Sharpe was John Balfour of Kinloch. John Balfour of Barley was not a Covenanter at all. The mistake is Sir Walter Scott's. (See Stephens, Dict. Biogr.)

5. Covenanters.—Declaration of the True Presbyterian party in Scotland, first published at Rutherglen 29th May 1679, and again at Carstairs, 2d June 1679. Signed by Richard Cameron and many others.

The date of the Rutherglen Declaration is correct. Hearing of this, on the 31st Claverhouse reached Rutherglen and made some arrests. On Sunday, June 1st, he marched from Hamilton to Loudon Hill, and was defeated (Drumclog.) He fell back on Glasgow. The insurgents seem to have spent the night at Hamilton. On the 2d, Hamilton, their leader, marched from Hamilton town north-west to Glasgow, about 11 miles by road, which he reached at ten o'clock A.M. Finding the Royal troops strongly posted, after some time he fell back on Hamilton, where they formed a kind of camp. What should take them on to Carstairs, a good 15 miles south-east as the crow flies, after their march of 22 already?

H. F. MORLAND SIMPSON.

MR STILLIE'S "BURNS" MSS.

We take the following from the *Kilmarnock Standard* of Saturday.

BURNS MANUSCRIPTS.

The Burns Monument Committee reported as follows:—

[TO THE TOWN COUNCIL OF KILMARNOCK]

14th November 1892.—A meeting of the Burns Monument Committee was held to-night. Present: Bailies Arbuckle, Davie, Wilson, and M'Graw; Treasurer Mackay; David Sneddon, and Mr M'Menan.—Bailie Arbuckle, chairman. The Chamberlain laid on the table six Burns manuscripts which, by request, he had received from Mr James Stillie, bookseller, George Street, Edinburgh, for the inspection of the committee. He also read a letter from Mr Stillie, offering to sell them for £100 sterling. After they had been examined by those present, it was considered advisable, before arriving at any decision as to their purchase, to have them tested, and it was resolved to send them to the British Museum for that purpose.

23rd November 1892.—The Burns Monument Committee met this evening. Present:—Bailies Wilson, Davie, and M'Graw; Treasurer Mackay; Messrs M. Smith, D. Sneddon, and Wm. M'Menan.—Treasurer Mackay, chairman. The Chamberlain stated that in accordance with the decision of last meeting, he had forwarded the Burns MSS. to Mr Bickley, manuscript librarian of the British Museum, inviting him to express his opinion upon them. Mr Bickley had replied that, on account of pressure of official work, he could not comply with the request of the Committee. In reply to a letter from the Chamberlain, Mr Stillie had written naming the source from which the MSS. were obtained, and stating that he was willing to guarantee their authenticity. The Committee having doubts, however, as to their genuineness, had returned the manuscript to Mr Stillie, with a note stating that they declined to purchase.

(Signed)

D. MACKAY, Chairman.

IN DEFENCE OF BURNS—(IF NEED BE.)

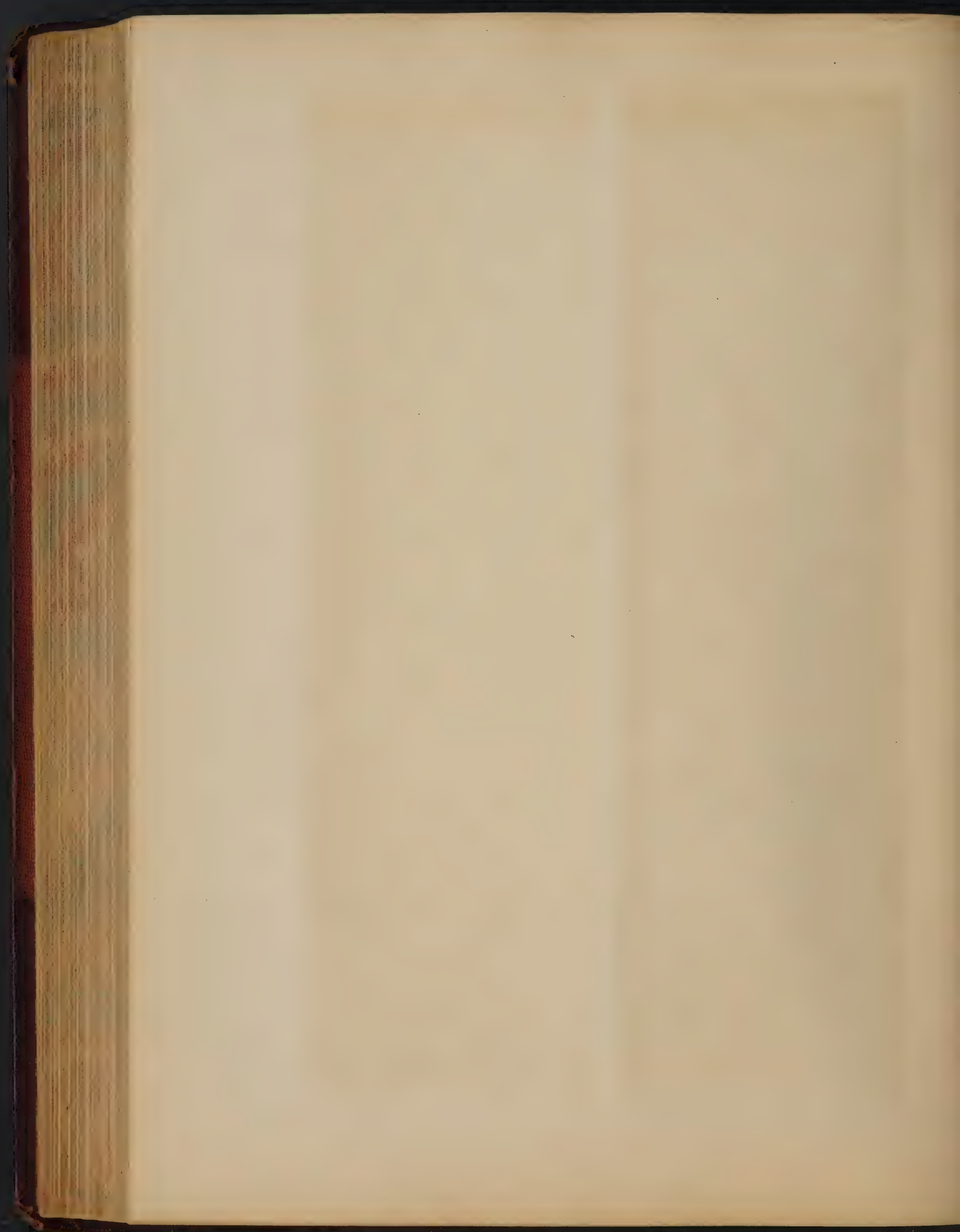
[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

SIR,—The *Cumnock Express* is not very discriminating in its criticism of Burns when it compares the style and language of the "John Hill" letter and the "Lines to a Rosebud" with that of the "P.S. to the Epistle to William Samson."

The "P.S." is doggerel, but it is Burns' doggerel; it bears the impress of Burns' kindly nature on the face of it, and, I take it, that it is doggerel because Burns meant it to be doggerel and nothing else, as it evidently suited his humour and purpose for the time-being.

The language is the auld braid Scots of Burns too—both as regards pronunciation and idiom. The composition of the "J. H." letter and the "Lines to a Rosebud" does not bear the faintest resemblance to either the English or Scots style of our poet.—I am, &c.

RIAM.





EDINBURGH, TUESDAY, December 13, 1892.

SUMMARY OF TO-DAY'S NEWS.

We publish a remarkable statement about the Stillie collection of MSS. :

Also some interesting letters about the copies of "Scots Wha Hae."

THE MSS.

THE MYSTERY OF MR STILLIE'S COLLECTION.

A STRANGE STORY.

CORRESPONDENTS have favoured us with many interesting side lights and incidents regarding the mysterious manuscripts and those who have acquired them, but it is surely reasonable to expect that those vending them should come forward and give a full and frank account of how the MSS. came into their possession. Take Mr Stillie for example—and we have no wish to say anything that would detract from his reputation as a bookseller, or to think of him, in connection with this painful affair otherwise than as an honourable old man, of whose infirmities and simple-mindedness undue advantage has been taken.

It seems that in 1890, when Mr Stillie's collection as then existing came to the notice of Mr John S. Kennedy, of New York, the latter, as a shrewd man of business, made inquiries as to the source from which so many MSS. had come. It was stated that they formed the collection of a Glasgow ship-builder of the name of "Dobie," and that as the family of the late "Mr Dobie" (so it was affirmed) had had some disagreements amongst themselves, an unprecedentedly extensive collection of historical documents and of autographs of literary celebrities had been dispersed. Exact particulars regarding this "Mr Dobie" were not forthcoming, although it was made pretty plain to one of Mr Kennedy's friends that it was not the same Mr Dobie, shipbuilder, whom he said he knew years previously. Is this Mr Dobie of the "Wilson-Dobie" referred to by one of our West country correspondents?

Later on, indeed not three months ago, Mr Stillie offered for sale to several public institutions an unusually important collection of Burns MSS., one item of which was the original of the Dedication to the members of the Caledonian Hunt of the first Edinburgh edition of his Poems, printed by Creech in 1787. To add to the value of this precious "relic," and to give it the desired air of genuineness, it had as a counter signature that of the printer—viz., "W. Creech." The other items were more or less important, and Mr Stillie offered to send the lot for inspection if desired. The description of the items was in a small printed handbill. A copy of this bill was submitted to Mr Kennedy, who offered to buy the Dedication MS. if genuine. It was at Kilmarnock when Mr Tod, who acted for Mr Kennedy, called.

But meantime another lot, and almost the most valuable hitherto offered, came upon the scene. Mr Tod was shown these MSS., and in reply to strict inquiries as to where they had come from, Mr Stillie stated that they were, as the notes on the back of them showed, the property of Henry Mackenzie, the Man of Feeling, and editor of the *Lounger*, published in 1784 and 1786. They bore Henry Mackenzie's autograph signature, and also evidence of most tender

and careful folding and binding with green ribbon, the brightness of which had not even faded. They were just the sort of thing which one would expect from Mackenzie, who at the opening of Burns' career welcomed him and appraised him in that open and appreciative manner which, for discriminating enthusiasm it has almost taken the generations till now to reach. Mr Tod was, however, not to be put off, and pointed out that the Man of Feeling died in 1831, and he (Mr Tod) wished to have an explanation of how Mackenzie's papers came to be opened only 61 years later. The reply was that the boxes lay with a member of a well-known firm of Edinburgh lawyers, whose name was given. Mr Tod, after making every inquiry, failed to find any trace of the gentleman referred to, and communicated this to Mr Stillie, who expressed his regret for having made a mistake; but, nevertheless, he still guaranteed the genuineness of the MSS. This was the lot sent to the British Museum, which Dr Maunde Thompson declared to be "palpable forgeries." On this fact appearing in our columns Mr Stillie wrote to Mr Tod as follows:—

"19 George Street, December 9, 1892.

"DEAR SIR,—I am still far too unable to attend to business, but Mr Hew Morrison's paragraph [this must refer to Dr Maunde Thompson's opinion of the MSS.] has grievously affected both my soul and body. If asked I would have been too glad to have given any information or explanation. I have authorised my agent to investigate every case, and feel assured it will end in my favour.—Yours truly,

"JAS. STILLIE.

"Andrew Tod, Esquire, Elmpark."

To this Mr Tod replied on the same day, and there the matter rests. Mr Tod deserves well of the public for the manner in which he managed to get this last bunch of documents submitted to the judgment of those best qualified to test their genuineness; and his name deserves a foremost place among the list of those citizens who have come voluntarily forward with the object of clearing up this strange mystery.

We append Mr Tod's last note to Mr Stillie, and it now rests with the latter to put the matter in its true and proper light, so far as it lies in his power. We thank Mr Tod for favouring us with copies of the correspondence which passed between himself and Mr Stillie:—

"Elmpark, Ettrick Road,  
December 9, 1892.

"DEAR SIR,—I have your note of to-day. You will remember that the history you gave me of the four Burns MSS. sent to the British Museum for examination turned out upon inquiry not to be correct. This you admitted in a note sent me when I told you of it. If you still choose to give me their real history, I will make further inquiry and publish the result. I think you owe this to Mr John S. Kennedy, of New York, considering the large amount of money he paid you for those he bought from you in 1890; and, indeed, you should also give me the history of these documents as well, now that doubt has been thrown upon their genuineness.—I am, yours truly,

ANDREW TOD.

"Mr James Stillie,  
Bookseller, 19 George Street."

THE TWO "SCOTS WHA HAES."  
[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."] 32 Charlotte Square,  
Edinburgh, December 12, 1892.

SIR,—I enclose copy of a correspondence between Mr George Andrew, S.S.C., and me, with copies of the three letters from Mr Andrew's correspondents referred to in his letter of 10th inst. to me; and these you probably will find sufficiently interesting to publish in your paper.





The history of the "Scots Wha Hae" belonging to the city is no doubt as well known as that of Mrs Burns MS., and it would so far satisfy the public mind to know it now.

Mr Quaritch will of course be aware of it, although possibly our city officials may not have been informed of it.—I am, &c.

W. MACGILLIVRAY.

Letter—George Andrew, S.S.C., to Mr Macgillivray, W.S.

Hollycot, Lasswade, December 10, 1892.

DEAR MR MACGILLIVRAY,—From the terms of your letter in last night's *Dispatch* I conclude that the enclosed three letters will interest you. The writer of the two first in date is the grand-nephew of the poet. His uncle, Gilbert Burns of Knockmaroon Lodge, near Dublin (now deceased), of whom he speaks, was the son of the poet's brother Gilbert, and his widow is the writer of the letter third in date.

I did not attach the importance to the matter which I should have done at the time, and put off making the inquiry till I should have occasion to be in Dublin.

Mr Gilbert Burns, of Dublin, died a few years ago, at an old age. He was one of the best-known and most-respected citizens of Dublin. I corresponded with him on business a good deal, and when last in Dublin, about fifteen years ago, I spent a day with him at his charming residence, and he then showed me the document in question, along with other manuscripts; but Mrs Burns was then from home, so that I have never met her personally.

Kindly return the letters sent at your earliest convenience.

I communicated with the Town Clerk last week, and promised to write him again on hearing from Mrs Gilbert Burns.—Yours sincerely,

(Signed) GEO. ANDREW.

Reply by Mr Macgillivray to the foregoing Letter.

December 11, 1892.

DEAR MR ANDREW,—Please accept my best thanks for your letter of yesterday and its inclosures, all of which I have read with great interest, and now return herewith; but I have taken the liberty of keeping copies.

The letters of your two correspondents, Mrs Burns, Dublin, and Mr A. J. Burns, New Zealand, puzzle me very much. I cannot believe that Mr Quaritch has made a mistake with regard to the "Scots Wha Hae" now belonging to our city; and yet, from the terms of the letters from your correspondents, there appears to be little room for doubt that the MS. in Mrs Burns' possession is also an original—if not the original.

The spirit-stirring character of the poem and its splendid patriotism must have produced a great impression on those who had been privileged to see or hear it while it was still in manuscript only, and that may have led to more than one copy of it being made and presented to special friends of the author.

But it is clear to me that, for the sake of all who are interested in these MSS., as well as for the protection of our public museums from the risk of being filled with spurious MSS. for genuine treasures, the question as to the authenticity of both these should not be allowed to remain in any doubt.

Both MSS. should be carefully examined and compared with each other by the most competent experts both in London and in Edinburgh; and I cannot suppose that Mrs Burns would be unwilling to afford all reasonable facilities to admit of that being done.

I trust your communication to the Town Clerk will have the effect of inducing the Town Council to take further steps with a view to removing all probable ground of doubt as to the authenticity of these MSS.; but, at the same time, I am strongly of opinion that your correspondent's letters should be at once sent to the *Evening Dispatch* for publication. If they were so published, the matter could not be allowed to rest without investigation.

If you would permit me, I would be glad to send the copies which I have kept—omitting the business parts—to the editor, along with a copy of your letter to me, and a copy of this reply.—I remain, yours sincerely,

W. MACGILLIVRAY.

George Andrew, Esq., Hollycot, Lasswade.

Mr Andrew's Answer to the above.

Hollycot, Lasswade, December 12, 1892.

DEAR MR MACGILLIVRAY,—I have just time before the post leaves to say that you have my full permission to use your own discretion in writing to the *Dispatch*.—Yours sincerely,

GEO. ANDREW.

Letters from Mr A. J. Burns to Mr Andrew referred to in Mr Andrew's letter to Mr Macgillivray of 10th instant.

New Zealand,

P.O. Rose 289, Dunedin, Sept. 23, 1890.

George Andrew, Esq., S.S.C.,

3 Hope Street, Edinburgh, Scotland.

MY DEAR SIR,—The Edinburgh Town Council recently purchased for £70 the original manuscript of "Scots Wha Hae." It was offered to the Council by Mr Kennedy, a New York banker, at the price which he paid for it. This newspaper clipping (copy quoted above), from the *Scotsman* of July 19, 1890, I beg to bring under your notice. The original manuscript of "Scots Wha Hae" was given to my grandmother, Mrs Gilbert Burns, by the poet. My uncle, Mr Gilbert Burns, Knockmaroon Lodge, Chapelizod, County Dublin, Ireland, fell heir to this manuscript at his mother's death, and it was in his possession when he died. Now, unless Mr Kennedy purchased this manuscript from my uncle's widow, then I say that both Mr Kennedy and the Edinburgh Town Council have been imposed upon. I give you this information that you may act upon it should you deem it advisable so to do. I have a fac-simile of "Scots Wha Hae," sent me by my uncle Gilbert many years ago.—Yours truly,

A. J. BURNS.

Mount Oliphant, Dunedin, New Zealand,

September 12, 1892.

George Andrew, Esq., S.S.C.,

3 Hope Street, Edinburgh, Scotland.

MY DEAR SIR,—I wrote you on 23d September 1890, and on 11th February 1892, re the original manuscript of "Scots Wha Hae." I have been thinking this matter over many times since I wrote to you. I am more and more convinced that there must be something wrong thereabout, as I cannot think that my Uncle Gilbert's widow would either give away or sell the original manuscript, therefore I am driven to the conclusion that it must have been stolen. If you have an opportunity of redding this matter up with the Lord Provost or any of the city officials, I will indeed be very glad to hear from you, if I am not imposing too much on your valuable time.—Yours truly,

A. J. BURNS.

Letter from Mrs Burns to Mr Andrew, referred to in Mr Andrew's letter of 10th instant.

Knockmaroon Lodge, Chapelizod,

County Dublin, Dec. 9, 1892.

DEAR SIR,—In reply to your letter of the 6th, I beg to say that the original manuscript of "Scots Wha Hae" is in my possession. It was presented by the poet to Mrs Gilbert Burns two years after her marriage in 1793, and at her death it came to my husband; that and other manuscripts relating to the poet I value very highly, and have declined to lend them for exhibition on more than one occasion, feeling myself wholly responsible for their safety. If, however, you should at any time be in Dublin, I shall be happy to show them to you.—Believe me, dear sir, yours truly,

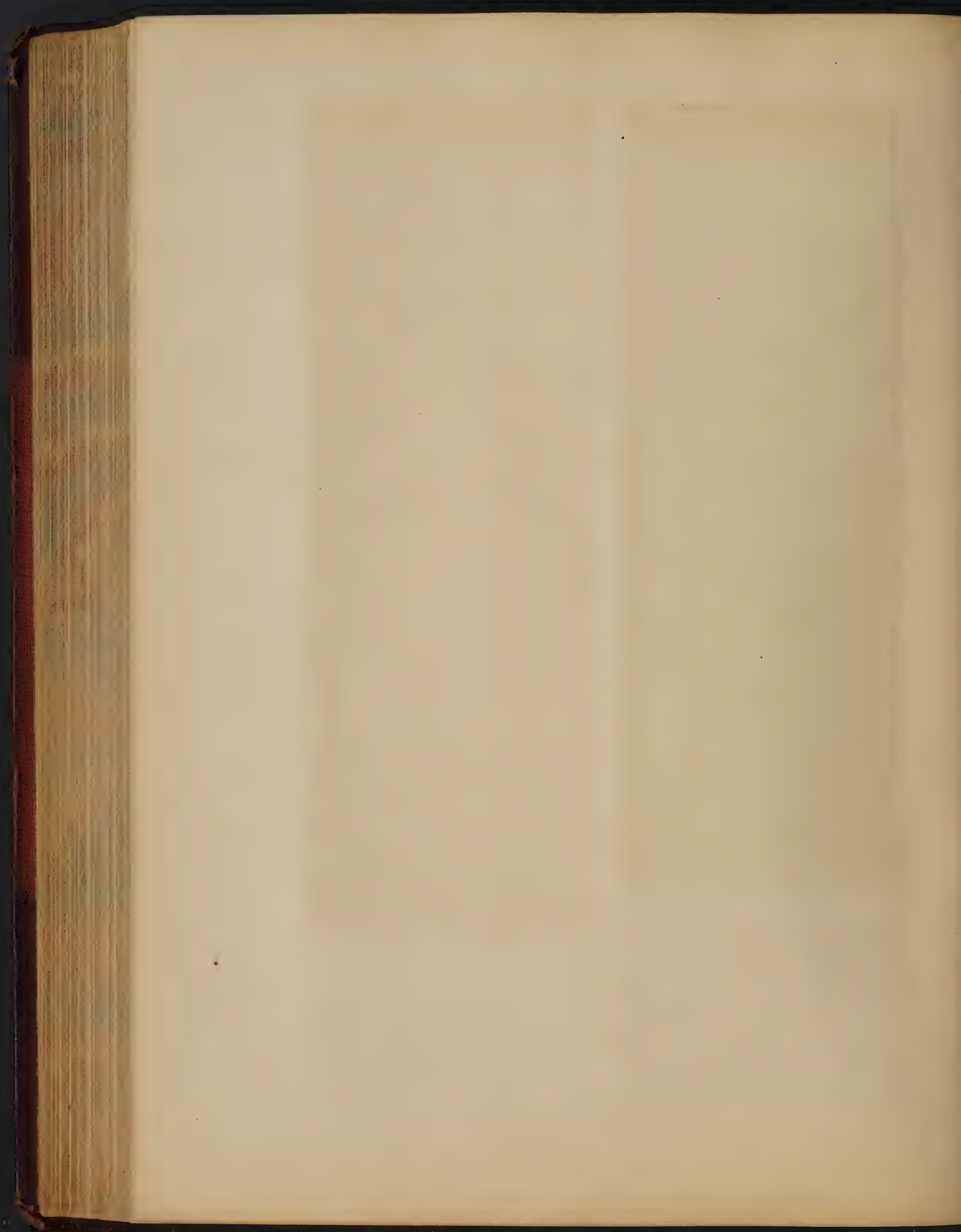
J. G. BURNS.

#### MORE DOCUMENTS ANALYSED.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

Edinburgh, December 12, 1892.

SIR,—In your issue of the 2d inst. I analysed six letters, ranging from 1757 to 1858. Here is the result of the examination of a further instalment from the same collection:—All but the last have been doctored by pasting paper where the binder's stitches had cut the folds. The ink is faint and brownish, and like the handwriting, appears to have too much similarity for documents extending over sixty-five years. The watermarks on Nos. 1, 2, and 4 are identical; a rampant lion inside a circle of three lines, surmounted by a large crown, a small R under the lion but within the band of the circle. No. 3 watermark—Posthorn in a shield surmounted by a crown, R. & T. at foot forming a script monogram. No. 9 similar, but script monogram J.G. Nos. 5 and 6, watermark B.B. (script monogram) in circle, with date 1795 under. No. 7, watermark small posthorn under a crown, with G.R. or P. in capital letters below. No. 8, watermark—figure of Britannia, with capital letters P and B at side, in oval of three lines, surmounted by a crown (similar to Nos. 1, 2, and 4, *supra*.) The paper is laid, not wove, and the texture is very much alike in all. Each forms, when unfolded, a folio leaf, with waterlines running down, having apparently been taken from a quarto volume.





1. Charles P.R. appointing John M'Intyre in Balchulish to be Lieutenant of His Majesty's Forces in the Regiment to be commanded by Glengarry, to be at once raised. Given at Perth this eighth September 1745. Signed. Docketed "Commission to be Lieutenant to James (sic) M'Intyre. \* \* \* The Prince attended Divine service on Sunday, 8th September, when a Mr Armstrong preached (*vide* Chambers' "Rebellion," p. 71. 1869 and later editions.)

2. W. Pitt to the Clerk, House of Commons, 15th January (?) 1783.

"Sir,—Would you arrange with the Secretary on the Committee of the India Bill to have a meeting on such an early date as would come in point of time before the motion of Mr Fox in order to arrange questions which his motion is sure to arrange in the discussion of the bill which will follow? You will also have the papers and documents in such a position that they may be easily accessible for reference.—I remain, yours (?) W. PITT."

Thursday.

A letter worthy of Mrs Malaprop. Arrange, forsooth!

3. Robt. Burns, Dumfries, to Mrs Bell, Ayr, 14th March 1793.

(Apologies for delay in replying to her letter sent some months before, and congratulations to Mrs F. on her book, a copy having been sent to the poet.)

4. Sir Ra. Abercromby to J. Read, Esq., factor to Lord Rothes, George Square, dated from 9 Princes Street, 16th July 1793.

(Relates to a land investment, about which he will call.)

5. H. Grattan to H. Cavendish, Esquire, The Coffee House, Merton Street, Dublin, dated from Sackville Street, 24th December 1796.

(Defines Lord N.'s Bill a useless piece of machinery.)

6. Horatio Nelson, Bath, to John Abercromby, Esq., John's Coffee House, Edinburgh, January 30, 1798.

(Mr Alexander Taylor to be transferred to the "Terpsichora." Thanks for attention to Mr Ritchie when in Scotland. Lady Nelson sends compliments.)

7. Viscount Nelson and Bronte to Dr Wilson, Plymouth, Saturday morning, 11 A.M.

(Invitation aboard to have a glass of wine with one or two more friends, &c.)

8. The same to Captain C. Anderson, Thursday.

(Promising his assistance and suggesting to Captain A. to have men ready and to get as many good ones on shore to assist him. Lord N. had written the Superintendent.)

9. Admiral Lord Collingwood, H.B.M.S. Ocean at sea, per corvette Eagle, to William Simpson, Esq., Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 9th March 1810.

(Thanking him for attending to Lord C.'s instructions. Refers him to Mr Mayhew for remaining documents.)

This selection is a proof of the versatility displayed in falsifying history and biography—all have been dug from the same "lead" mine.

It is well known that Burns sometimes wrote on glass, and an example of this kind was recently for sale in the South Side of Edinburgh at a good round sum. It would be interesting to obtain the descent of this fragile memento of the poet. Is it still for sale?

It might be advisable to collect second-hand book or MS. catalogues issued during the last four or five years in Edinburgh, and have them sent to the editor of the *Dispatch* for reference. Some interesting details which might help the present case could doubtless be obtained therefrom.—I am, &c.

VIATOR.

#### FAIRPLAY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

13 Bright's Crescent, Edinburgh,  
December 12, 1892.

SIR,—Mr W. C. Angus, in your to-day's issue, says there are two causes involved in this controversy. If I have failed to show Mr Angus that there is yet a third cause in this, and every other, controversy—viz., the cause of fairplay—then indeed have I, so far as he is concerned, written in vain. Surely I made it sufficiently clear that it was with this third cause alone that I concerned myself, and that into the merits of the controversy itself I did not enter. Mr Angus puts the term "anonymity" to a distorted use. If he can prove that *personal attacks by anonymous correspondents* have not been confined to one side, he needs not my consent for applying my "strictures" to both sides alike. The British love of fair fighting implies the opposite of partisanship.—I am, &c.

JAS. D. WALKER.

#### BURNS LETTERS.

The following letters appear in to-day's *Scotsman*—  
Elmwood, Moffat, December 9, 1892.

SIR,—In my letter which appeared in your columns to-day I referred to a missing letter of Burns. By a singular coincidence a letter signed "S.S.C." appears on the same subject in the *Evening Dispatch*, in which the writer states:—"About ten years ago a client of Messrs Hope, Mann, & Kirk died, leaving the residue of her estate to the Royal Infirmary. Among this residue were three original letters . . . written by the poet Burns to an acquaintance. The letters were shown to me by Mr William Mann, the senior partner of the firm of Hope, Mann, & Kirk, W.S. . . . I forget the contents of the letters, except that one of them dealt with the question of marriage. . . . Mr Mann informed me that the three letters had been handed over by him to the Royal Infirmary on the winding up of the estate of his client. I regret I am unable to give the name of the testator . . ." &c.

I think I can help "S.S.C." with the information he requires. My aunt, Mrs Scott, left the residue of her estate to the Royal Infirmary, and I know with it were letters of Burns to her father, Mr Beugo. I have no doubt one of the letters "S.S.C." refers to is the missing letter I wished to unearth. As it is upwards of twenty years since Mrs Scott spoke to me on the subject, it is possible the letter was returned in the interim.

Mr Beugo, besides his professional acquaintance with Burns as the engraver of the Nasmyth portrait, was an intimate associate of his; so the letters are certain to be fraught with interest to all admirers of our national poet. And I trust the efforts of "S.S.C." and others will be successful in enriching our literature by giving them publicity.—I am, &c. M.

Edinburgh, December 1892.

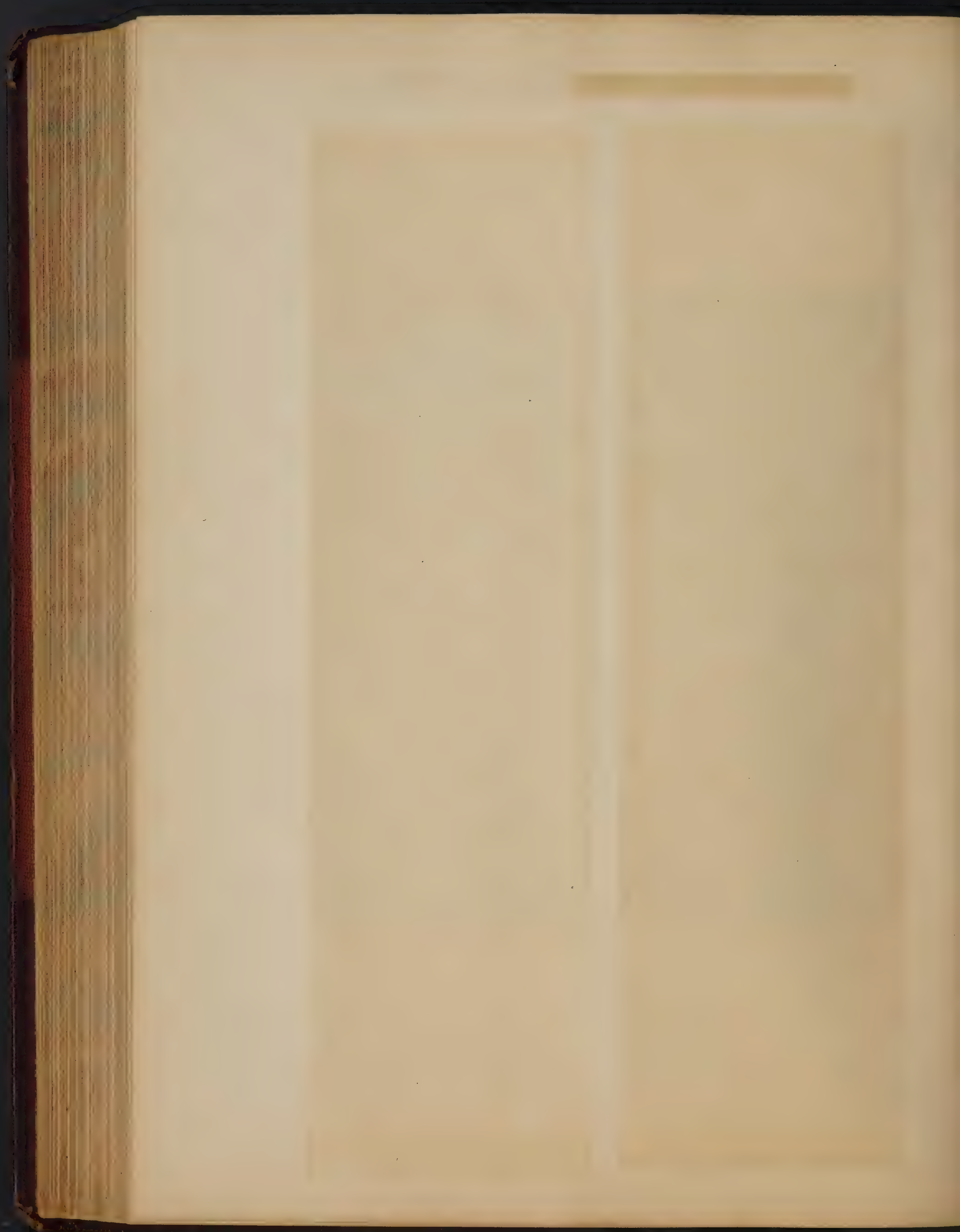
SIR,—Referring to a letter from Burns to John Beugo, said to have disappeared about thirty years ago, I find, on reference to Paterson's edition of the poet's works, a second letter to Mr Beugo there "printed for the first time." May not this be the letter in question? It is only a short note, and in no way resembles the letter described by your correspondent; but, if such a letter ever did exist, the question naturally arises, why was it never published alongside the well-known letter of September 9th, 1788, which is found in every edition of Burns back to 1801? The letter published in Paterson's edition belonged to the late W. F. Watson, and must now be in the hands of the Trustees of the Board of Manufactures with the rest of Mr Watson's Burns manuscripts bequeathed to the National Gallery. These manuscripts have not yet been exhibited, nor has the public access to them.—I am, &c. E. S.





OTHERS besides "eminent collectors" and "venerable antiquarian authorities" will have scars to show, as the result of taking part in the war of the Forged MSS. Long after the business has been disposed of, and when it has begun to be forgot in the busier centres of national life, the feuds to which it has given rise may still be burning fiercely at Cumnock. When one reflects upon this and upon the other circumstances of his case, it is impossible not to feel sorry for the editor of the *Cumnock Express*. He is left with the mournful task of nursing the memory of a lost opportunity. He had manuscripts in his hands which, had he not allowed enthusiasm to run away with his judgment, he might have discovered and proclaimed to be a fraud. Instead of this, he pronounced them genuine, and thus not only tumbled prone into error, but traduced the genius of the Bard he loves. He had also a most interesting correspondence going on in his columns; and just as it got to the most interesting point, he must "choke it off." The remembrance of these things is enough to sadden any soul, but especially the soul of a man who is poet and patriot as well as editor. Yet Mr Craibe Angus will not let him go and nurse his hurts in secret. He must needs expose his wounds and rub salt into them, as he has done to the uglier sores on the reputation as an antiquary of the eminent collector of Rillbank Crescent. Surely this erring and half-repentant Ayrshire editor has suffered enough. Let him be left to the tender mercies of his brother of the *Cumnock News*. Their quarrel is so pretty a one as it stands that we almost fear to spoil it by interjecting a word of explanation. The "gentleman of the *News*" flung himself into the fray by, as he says himself, merely "stating a fact" about what occurred when the "sealed bottle" was deposited under the monument of Peden, the Covenanter.

Now, there is nothing more irritating than to have the enemy chime in with his "facts" when you are sore and put out. The gentleman of the *Express* turned round to tell the public that "all the part the gentleman of the *News* took in or connected with the monument of that grand and weird old Covenanter of undying fame was to put in appearance at the inauguration of his memorial here at Cumnock, and at the cake and wine banquet which followed the impressive ceremony." Evidently there are mysteries here which only those versed in local feuds and feasts can fathom. The *News* is not slow in answering the challenge of "the local reporter of the *Express*." He has seen him, he says, "trailing his coat tails before us." "Not content with dangling them in full view of his Cumnock readers, he has been dangling them along the streets of Edinburgh, and figuratively asking us to wipe our feet on them." Yes; he admits and glories in the counter-facts. "We took part in the cake and wine banquet—our particular liquid, however, was Adam's wine;" besides listening to Professor Blackie's singing, and seeing him "knocking things over while doing it." Altogether it must have been a memorable scene, and one wonders who held the rival editors when Blackie set the example of knocking things about? And who is Adam? Can it be the name of a local wine merchant? We shall learn all about it, no doubt, in the future instalments of the controversy that rends the Ayrshire Eatanswill. Meanwhile the gentleman of the *News* is left rejoicing that "our amiable friend at Breezyhill"—Mr Todd suffers much from his friends, even when he selects them from among elders in Covenanting kirks—"should tell the Edinburgh people that our humble self was present at these grand goings on." Plainly a forward, pert, and self-conscious young man. Have at him, Breezyhill!





THE MSS.

"SCOTS WHA HAE."

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

26 Princes Street, Edinburgh, December 13, 1892.

SIR,—Not having been deceived by the spurious MSS., I have abstained from the discussion of them in your columns; but will you allow me space for a few words on the "Scots Wha Hae" in the Town Council Chambers, as I see that it is referred to in your issue of to-day, and upon it my professional opinion has already been quoted by you?

I was requested to examine this document by Mr Auldjo Jamieson, and some one (neither he nor I) sent me report to you, which was that it is undoubtedly genuine.

What I now desire to point out is this, that there need be no question of genuineness raised by Mr A. J. Burns or any one else, on account of the existence of other copies of this song in the poet's handwriting, for that he did produce several is well known.

Mr Scott Douglas claimed that the original was with Lord Dalhousie, but had to add that Mr Locker the poet had, since he wrote, shown a very early and a different version, and now again we hear of "the original" in Ireland, and with a good history attached to it.

Priority of versions is a very interesting question, but it should be kept distinct from that of authenticity when, as in this case, there is no need to arouse suspicion. To quote Mr Scott Douglas, "Many copies of the ode in the bard's handwriting still exist," and although some of these are copies altered by the poet to meet the views of his friend Thomson, they are all of great interest and value, although not all of equal value.—I am, &c.

WILLIAM BROWN.

Edinburgh, December 13, 1892.

SIR,—I was very much interested in reading in the *Dispatch* to-day the correspondence between Mr Andrew and his clients regarding a copy of the famous ode, "Scots Wha Hae." I have long understood that one of the original copies made by the poet went to Australia or New Zealand, and the fact that relatives of the author are there writing on the subject gives strength to the belief. I presume it is this same copy that is now found located in Ireland, and in the possession of Mrs Burns.

In the Burns Calendar published by Mr M'Kie, Kilmarnock, there is given a long list of Burns relics in the possession of "Gilbert Burns, Esq., Knockmaroon Lodge, Chapelizod, County Dublin," including the "Big Ha Bible," and many personal varieties, as well as MSS.; but the ode is not mentioned. The original manuscript of "The Jolly Beggars" is specified. There is a paragraph saying "a few autograph poems and letters of Burns, all of which have been published."

It would be interesting to learn, if Mr Andrew can get the information, whether this included the MS. now brought to the knowledge of collectors and admirers of the poet. Mr Scott Douglas, in the Kilmarnock edition of the poems, states that there were numerous copies of this ode made by the poet, and that all the copies now existing seem to be in the second or spoiled form, which Thomson induced Burns to adopt in order to fit it to the "*Lewie Gordon*" instead of "*Hey tuttie tuttie*." How the copy in Mrs Burns' possession reads we may yet learn.

There is another copy which I have seen in Brechin Castle (where there is a rich collection of Burns MSS.) This copy is the one, I believe, given to Thomson for his publication.

The copy in the Corporation museum here is undoubtedly right, and need give no anxiety to collectors. It was carefully examined by the best London experts at Sotheby's before it was purchased, and I am not aware that friend Quaritch had anything to do with it. If he had, it only gives it greater value.

It is very satisfactory to learn that three genuine copies of "Scots Wha Hae" are all located so near, and in such good keeping. Perhaps this discussion may lead to the knowledge of other rare MSS. of the poet.

I much fear it is impossible to get anything like a bibliography of Burns' MS. made up. The list given by M'Kie is very small and wants details. He takes no notice of the Gibson Craig collection, nor of the Brechin Castle, nor Whitetord Mackenzie's, and others since dispersed. Scott Douglas gives almost no information.—I am, &c.

THOMAS CHAPMAN.

In case of misapprehension it may be stated that Mr Kennedy, of New York, made a free gift of "Scots Wha Hae" to the Town Council through Mr George Auldjo Jamieson. The letter of the New Zealand correspondent printed yesterday might lead to the inference that Mr Kennedy was paid for it.

MORE UNHISTORICAL MSS.

1. Covenanters.—Declaration, Symintoun, 29 July 1680, by the Covenanters after the battle of Drumclog. Numerous signatures.

Drumclog was fought Sunday, June 1st, 1679. On Sunday, June 22d, the Insurgents were dispersed at Bothwell Brig. Are these also posthumous signatures?

2. Covenanting Declaration by a number of Presbyterians adhering to the Rutherglen Testimony, and Disclaiming the Hamilton Declaration because of the Perfidy and Covenant breaking of King Charles I. Cathcart, 4 Dec. 1680. With numerous signatures.

Charles I. never broke the Covenant, for the simple reason that he never signed it. Why should they have raked up "ancient history," with such a text as Charles II. to preach on?

3. James VII.—Graham of Claverhouse. Passport signed at the Leauguer at Prieshill, 5 May 1685. To James Wisheart and his Servant.

Macaulay says somewhere that Claverhouse "spelt like a washerwoman." Most of people did in those days, as Macaulay must have known. But I doubt if C. ever wrote "Leauguer." The name "Prieshill" looks tempting, reviving memories of John Brown, "the Christian carrier," whom Claverhouse caused to be shot for treason, May 1st, 1685, at Prieshill, in the parish of Muirkirk. What should set Claverhouse to "Leauguer" there? De Foe, in his "History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland" (1717), says Claverhouse had his headquarters at Mauchlin. On May 3d he was at Galston, whence he wrote his famous dispatch describing the occurrence. How comes he to be signing Passports? Who was "James Wisheart"?

4. Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee. Address, signed July 1689, to his Army before the Battle of Killiecrankie. With further additions by one of his officers, addressed to John Aston, Esq., at Belmore, Staffordshire. With Aytoun's esteemed poem, "The Burial March of Dundee."

I have read that Dundee did make a speech to his forces. A copy (from memory, if genuine) is said to exist in the Nairne Papers, on which much doubt has been cast. But how came Claverhouse to sign his speech? Or is this a copy printed or written on the battlefield, and signed before he received the fatal bullet? And why, when he was about it, did he not sign in full July 27? Would Dundee stir his Highlanders to enthusiasm by a speech in English? Let "John Aston, Esq.," go for what he is now worth.

5. Sinclair and Rothes.—Bond, signed 11 May 1668, of Relief and Obligation, by Hew Sinclair of Ingletoun, to Sir John Drummond of Burnbank, of his Cautionary Obligations to John, Earl of Rothes, Lord Chancellor.

"Hew Sinclair" apparently neglected his obligation to style Rothes a Duke. On Middleton's removal the Earl of Rothes was made Lord High Commissioner, October 14, 1664. Soon afterwards he was made a Duke; when, I cannot at this moment say. But in a letter of the Council on the Pentland Rising, November 17, 1666, he is addressed as "your Grace."

6. Crichtounes.—Obligation, 3 Nov. 1666, Notarially Executed by Andrew and Robert Crichtounes, in Fingland, Dalry, to Lieut.-Col. Sir James Turner. A curious document.

This is interesting; for the Pentland rising began at Dalry, Kirkcudbright, November 14, 1666, by a brush between some rustics and a party of Sir James Turner's men. In this parish there is a Fingland Hill. And for all I know, the name Crichton or Crichtons (?) may be connected with Dalry. But when did Sir James Turner become "Lieut.-Col.?" I will not maintain a negative. But in 1663 Turner speaks of "the Earle of Linlithgow, my Lieutenant-Colonell," and mentions one Ratray, the "Lieutenant of my company." In March 1666 Sir James had 120 foot and 30 horse. About September half of his foot were withdrawn to defend Leith against the Dutch.







I find no mention in his Memoirs of this promotion.

Possibly I may find time later on to pursue this examination. In conclusion, the MSS. I have criticised are described as having been "carefully examined and favourably reported upon by one of our chief genealogists, whose opinion is that the writing and paper are all of the dates of the period." The public has a right to know his name, but probably never will.—I am, &c. H. F. MORLAND SIMPSON.

#### THE CITY MUSEUM AND THE "MACKENZIE PERMIT."

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT.]

Through the courtesy of the city officials, I had this week, along with a gentleman skilled in old MSS., an opportunity of examining the collection of autographs in the new museum in the City Chambers. The museum, it may be mentioned, has only within the last year been organised and arranged in a large room in the east wing of the building, and bearing, as the collection does, upon the municipal antiquities, it is a deeply interesting and valuable one, and richly deserves a visit. Here we find the old blue banner of the trades, old views of Edinburgh, the standards of weights and measures of various periods, armour, medals, cups, and bells, a large collection of historical works, and several fine specimens of Burns MSS. These are undoubtedly genuine. The spurious element has, however, found its way into the collection, and will, no doubt, in due time be eliminated like weeds from a flower-bed, or marked clearly to be what they are—forgeries. The "permit" or pass to "Thomas Schaw" on parchment, the gift to the city of Mr James Mackenzie, which you have already referred to and partly sketched, came in for a good deal of our scrutiny. It is a document about 12 inches long by 6 inches deep, the bottom part folded in about an inch, with a blue silk ribbon perforating the fold and knotted at the end. It is dated "Holirood . . . October 1745." An attempt has been made to indicate the presence at one time of a wax seal on the ribbon, but when that adjunct may have disappeared, it is very remarkable that the ribbon is of a uniform colour, and nearly as fresh as if it had been purchased from Messrs Jenner & Co. a few weeks before their great fire. It is also noteworthy that the folded part of the parchment is the only part that is really soiled, and evidently some little trouble has been taken to bring it to its present dirty state. When we recollect that this document is supposed to have been issued on the very eve of the Rebels leaving Edinburgh, that it is not a document of any great consequence, it is very improbable that Secretary Murray would have taken so much trouble as to have it written on vellum and ornamented with ribbon and seal. My "expert" friend declared that the ribbon alone would stamp it as a forgery, but, besides, it bore falsity in every line.

#### A CLUE THAT WAS MISSED.

On Saturday, June 6, 1891, the following letter appeared in the *Kilmarnock Standard*:—

#### AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF BURNS.

SIR,—A copy of the first Edinburgh edition of the poems of Burns has just been sold to a Kilmarnock gentleman by the well-known dealer in Burns literature and MSS., Mr James Stillie, Edinburgh. The book is in very fine condition, beautifully bound in ruby morocco, with gilt edges, and has inserted in it what is described as an original unpublished letter, which runs as follows:—

DEAR SIR,—I had your note and write you in great haste to get the accounts ready, as it is my intention to proceed to Edinburgh to issue another set of Songs, or perhaps another edition of the old Poems. I am referred to, and have much confidence in, the opinion of Mr Ballantyne, who has befriended me heretofore. You understand, then, that nothing further is to be done. Yours in great haste

Mossiel, Nov. 16th, 1786.

ROBT. BURNS.

The address is as follows:—

Mr John Ferguson,  
Printer,

Paisley.

Paid per Carrier.

It would appear that Mr Ferguson had been negotiating with the poet to bring out a new edition of his works, but that idea, if it ever had been seriously entertained, had been set aside by the prospect of publication in Edinburgh. The letter is a splendid piece of calligraphy, and taken in conjunction with a copy of the edition issued shortly after it was written and to which it relates, it has a unique interest. Perhaps some of the readers of the *Standard* may be able to supply information regarding Mr Ferguson, the Paisley printer, and his connection with the poet.

BURNSIANA.

A correspondent informs us that the above "Burns" letter, which was inserted in a copy of the Edinburgh edition of the Poems, worth by itself about thirty shillings, was with the volume sold for £10. The letter fell dead in the *Standard*, but the original, or that which did duty for one, was shown to accepted judges of the writing of Burns, and being by them pronounced spurious, was returned to Mr Stillie, who at once refunded the purchase price. The letter is clever enough to catch a novice, but not enough to impose on any one capable of weighing the circumstances to which it relates. If the gentleman who made the purchase had informed the readers of the *Standard* that the letter had been pronounced spurious, the strong probability is that the announcement would have given an earlier clue than the "John Hill" letter. Our correspondent adds, that although this occurred in the "Bonnet Town," and although it is also true that a false Burns MS. was raffled from the window of the successors of "Wee Johnnie"—the printer of the first Kilmarnock edition of the Poems—it is not to be supposed that "Auld Killie" is not expert in Burnsiana. Almost every place has within itself some centre and soul of the Burns cult, and Kilmarnock forms no exception to the rule. Mr Sneddon, in his letter to the *Dispatch*, was too modest to say that he himself was the author of the "Burns Holograph Manuscripts in the Kilmarnock Museum," which, except that in the British Museum, is by far the best public collection in the country. The book in style, matter, and arrangement shows that Kilmarnock in the matter of Burns is "up to date." The book is a model of its kind; and if those who traded in the forgeries had taken it for their model, and insisted on the history of each MS. being given along with it, collectors would not have been landed in the present pass.

#### "THE CUMNOCK EXPLANATION" EXPLAINED.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]  
*Express Office, Cumnock, December 13, 1892.*

SIR,—The letter of Mr Angus, which appeared in your issue of yesterday, does me very great injustice in more than one particular. I am glad, however, that he credits me with "a good conscience." I can fully assure him, too, that I have never felt a moment's unrest on account of my having closed the flat and lagging controversy when it had simply come to be engaged in like two cavilling and angry school-boys, but whose disputation never got beyond the vulgar—"You're a liar!" "You're another!" Mr Mackenzie's assailants having been heard first, it was but right that he should be heard last.

While well convinced at the time that the MSS. put into my hands by Mr Mackenzie—the last part of it especially—was genuine, I did not *absolutely* commit myself to an opinion, as may be seen from what I said of being unable to find any trace whatever of "John Hill," to whom the letter was addressed. But though I had done so more decidedly than I did, when I have so frankly owned that I was deceived, after the overwhelming proof which you, Mr Editor, have published, what use is there in Mr Angus reverting to that matter now? If I was deceived I was duped in good company—that of Mr Wallace Bruce, the poet United States Consul, Edinburgh, and (if Mr Angus is right) the committee of the Carnegie Library of "the auld town of Ayr."

Mr Angus may be able to speak for himself, but how he can do so for Mr James Stillie I do not see. What he says about this fine old gentleman (for whom all of us feel deeply) not having endorsed the genuineness of the Burns MSS., will go for nothing, when I tell him that I had letters from Mr Stillie regarding the large and interesting collection of Burns MSS. in his possession long ago, these letters dating back for a period of nearly two years, or from the time of my controversy with the late Rev. Dr Edgar, of Mauchline, in the columns of the *Scotsman*, regarding the character of the "Holy Willie" of Burns.

Mr Angus seems to think that I ought to have "taken up a neutral position in the matter!" Have you done so, Mr Editor? I opine not. Then why should I? I have changed my opinion, I grant; and I did so the instant that truth and the abundant proof which you have published prompted me to do so; and why I should be castigated for this I cannot divine.

It would be beside the subject to begin to discuss the quality of the poetry of Burns. My having referred to the "Rosebud" poetry, and to that of the postscript to the "Simson Epistle," was done for a very different purpose than to underrate Burns, as any one may see.







Mr Angus writes as if no person on his side had taken part in this controversy but himself. If he did not say it, another of the opponents of Mr Mackenzie said that he could not believe that Burns ever would write a sentence like one contained in the "John Hill" letter.

I do not in the least grudge that Mr Angus and Mr Colvill-Scott "have been right from the first." I am only sorry that gentlemen like Messrs Mackenzie and Stillie, whom I esteemed, should have been wrong; and no one rejoices more than I do that the truth has been made known, and that there is a hope that the flames will soon consume all the spurious MSS. which you, Mr Editor, have referred to. I would also earnestly advise the "honest men" of Ayr to have the Burns MS. presented to the Carnegie Library submitted to the best experts, and if, as Mr Angus says, it is spurious, then let the fire consume it too by all means; for if *only* genuine MSS. of Ayrshire's greatest son should be carefully laid up for all time, it ought to be in the town of Ayr. I would, however, have none of the spurious MSS. given to be licked up by the tongues of flame, save in some such public way as will satisfy all men that they had perished for ever.

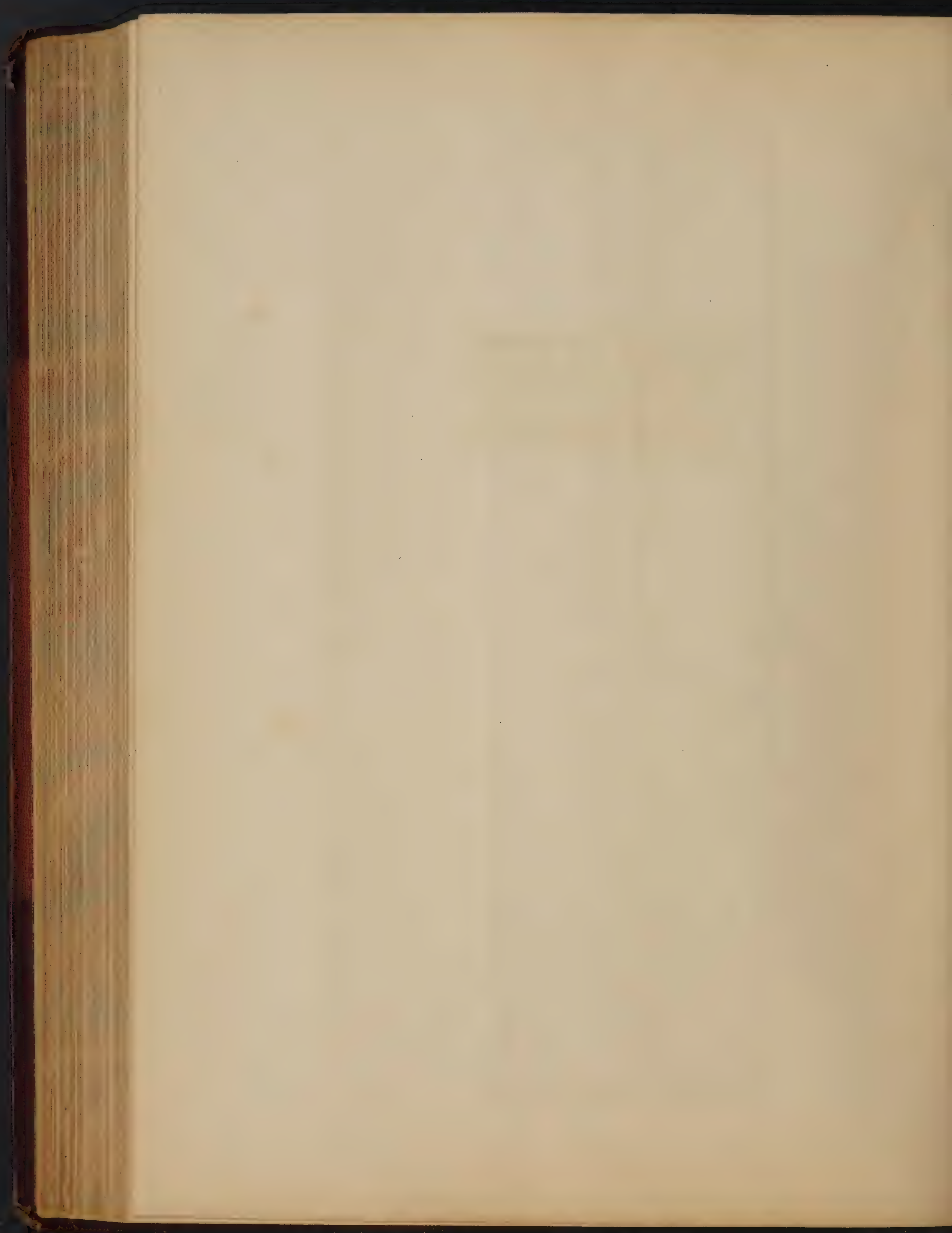
I would have liked to have added a word to "Riam," who also has his little whisper in your yesterday's paper, had there been anything in his letter save his assertion that "the *Cumnock Express* is not very discriminating in its criticism of Burns," whom, however, I *did not* criticise at all. Had "Riam" or *Ram*—or whatever is his name—had much discrimination, he would have seen that I did not make the comparison between the "Rosebud" poetry and that of the postscript of Burns, above referred to, for the purpose of underrating him, but *only* that he was not always among the gods, and did not *always* sing like a seraph; and that, if the feeble poetry alone of the two poems given in the *Express* as those of Burns had been the *only* reason for pronouncing them spurious, that would have gone but a very little way indeed. But, instead of underrating him, I have all my life spoken and written of him as one of the greatest of poets, and (with all his acknowledged failings) best of the sons of men. The noble sentiments of his poetry inspire with hope and cheer the hearts of the labouring poor in many lands. His songs are not popular with one class only. They are admired by all classes, and they are sung wherever waves the British flag or the English tongue is spoken. They awake the slumbering echoes on the banks of the Ganges, and by "Wild Ontario's boundless lake." They are chanted amid the far-distant islands of "The Melancholy Main," and they are sung on the shores of Australia. I, too, have felt their power from early boyhood till the present hour, and through all these years the praise of "Coila's Bard" has always been on my tongue. Why, then, does Mr Angus begin to chastise me now with his knotty thong? Has he taken this roundabout way of having his little revenge for the appearance of Mr Mackenzie's *Scotsman's* letter and confession in our columns last week, and not also his reply? He ought not to expect too much at once from a small weekly paper. Let him have patience till Friday next, and he will have the pleasure of seeing himself in print in the columns of the *Express*.

Apologising for the length of this letter. I am, &c.  
A. B. TODD.

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Numerous correspondents have again written to us respecting MSS. in their possession—some of them sending photos, others asking if a certain MS. is autograph or lithograph. Almost anybody can, of course, distinguish between these latter classes; and as to genuineness, we would again repeat that the British Museum authorities have kindly agreed to give an opinion if the documents are transmitted through Mr Hew Morrison, Librarian of the Public Library, Edinburgh. Correspondents will please accept this as a general reply to their inquiries.

The present investigation would be very much facilitated were correspondents who possess suspected documents acquired within the past six years to send to us the names of songs and poems they may have, and also the names of the persons to whom are addressed any suspected letters. We do not wish the originals to be sent.





**Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.**

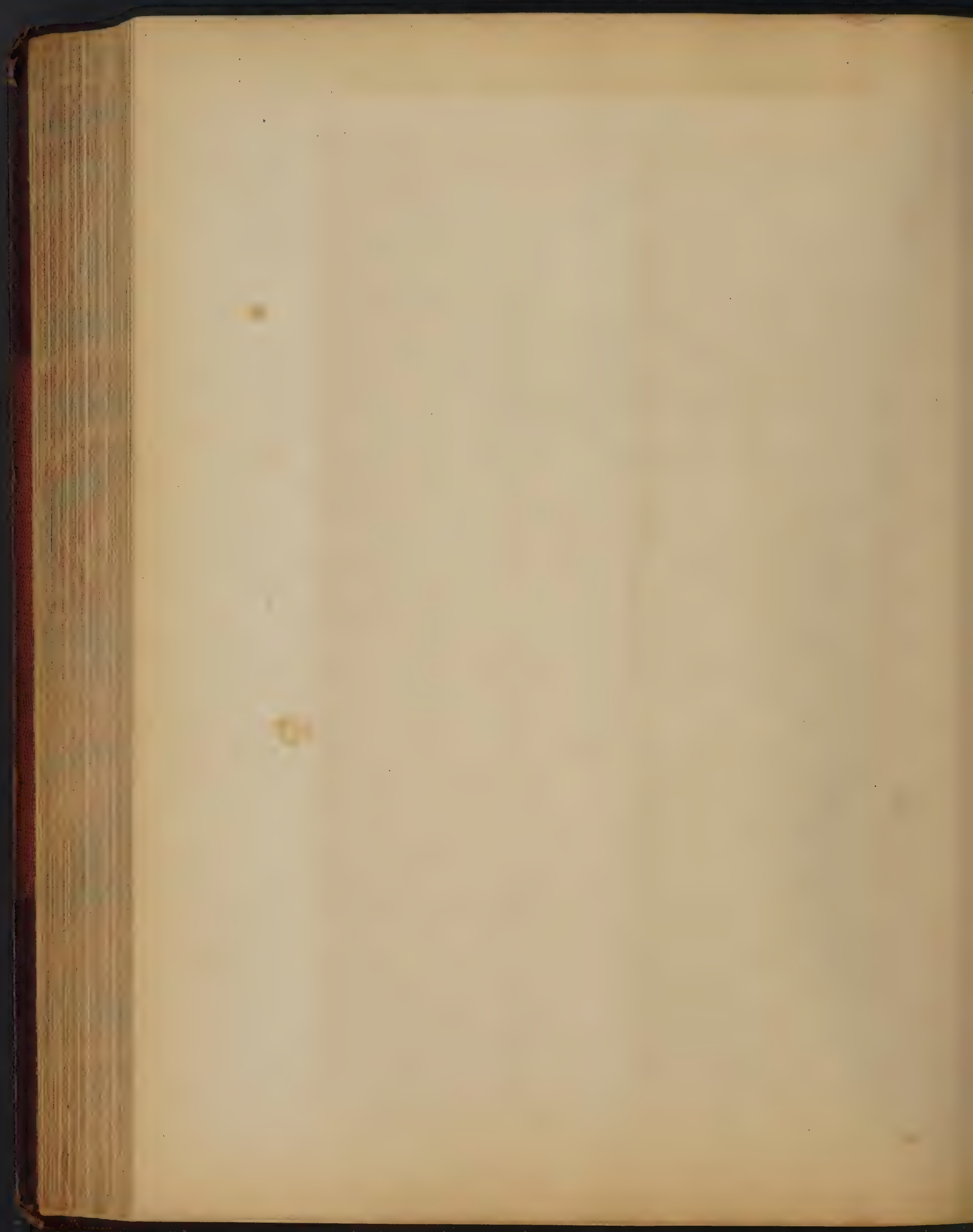
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EDINBURGH, THURSDAY, December 15, 1892.

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We publish some interesting communications  
respecting the copies of "Scots Wha Hae."

No reply can be got from Mr Stillie to Mr  
Andrew Tod's offer.





# THE MSS.

## MR STILLIE'S REPLY TO MR TOD.

The following letter has been sent to Mr Andrew Tod, and is the only reply he has received in answer to his letter to Mr Stillie of 9th inst., in which he said if Mr Stillie chose to give him the true history of the Burns MSS. recently offered to Mr Kennedy, as well as those sold to him in 1890, Mr Tod would make further inquiry, and publish the result. We fear that the search-light of inquiry is not to be let in upon the darkness which surrounds these MSS., as Mr Stillie's agent says nothing about his being "authorised to investigate every case," as mentioned in Mr Stillie's letter of 9th inst. to Mr Andrew Tod:—

Chambers, 3 Thistle Court, Edinburgh,  
December 14, 1892.

DEAR SIR,—Mr James Stillie, who is very ill, and confined to bed, has requested me to write to you, and ask you, if you have any further communications to make, to send them to me, as his agent, seeing he is quite unable to attend to business.—Yours truly,  
D. R. GRUBB, Solicitor.

## "SCOTS WHA HAE."

As a supplement to the letters in the *Dispatch* of to-day, it may be worth quoting Mr Scott Douglas' note in Paterson's edition of Burns' Poems, Vol. 3, p. 151:—

"With the exception of the first copy of the Ode now in the possession of Lord Dalhousie (Brechin Castle), from which our text is printed, there is not in the world a single transcript of this address in the author's holograph as originally composed, and now world approved. Many copies of the Ode in the Bard's handwriting still exist, but, with the exception stated, they are all of the Thomson breed, murdered, through every fourth line being sprawled out to fit the paltry tune *Lewie Gordon*."

"Since writing the above, it has come to our knowledge that Frederick Locker, Esq., author of 'London Lyrics,' is in possession of our poet's first draught of the famous Ode undoubtedly penned on 31st August 1793, immediately after the 'Evening Walk.' Mr Locker, after a keen competition, purchased this interesting relic at a sale of Burns MSS. in 1861."

This makes four copies of the "Scots Wha Hae" now existing in the poet's holograph.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

Glasgow, December 14, 1892.

SIR,—A word as to the fortunes of the national war song, several copies of which are known to collectors. The George Thomson copy—which was the first published, and may, for want of a fitter term, be called the "spiae fittit" version, having, to fit the music, been altered in the terminal lines—was sold, along with the whole of Burns' letters to him (with the exception of one, now in the British Museum, which had been abstracted), for 250 guineas, by Mr Chapman's firm, in 1852, to Lord Panmure. They have been promised by the present representative of the family to the proposed Burns exhibition. As to the existence of this copy there can be no manner of doubt; nor can there be any doubt as to there having been two copies in the Pickering collection. One, the copy made by the poet for the Earl of Buchan, was knocked down (1854) for £33 to Henry Stevens. The ode itself had somehow got separated from the well-known letter which Burns had sent to the Earl along with it. Mr David Laing (who was then in possession of the letter), having seen a newspaper notice of the occurrence, communicated with Mr Stevens, with the result that the letter passed to Mr Stevens in exchange for other MSS. of the poet; and Mr Stevens, after the lapse of eighteen years' weary waiting, succeeded in selling the ode, along with the letter, to Mr Charles Sumner, for fifty guineas. The ode, which is written on a half-sheet of quarto paper, was bequeathed by Mr Sumner to Harvard College Library, in which it now is.

The second copy, which probably contains the earliest form of the ode, passed into the collection of Mr Locker-Lompson, the accomplished poet and compiler of *Lyra Elegantiarum*. The second verse, which

was omitted by Burns from subsequent copies, reads:—

Now's the day, and now's the hour,  
See approach proud Edward's power;  
Sharply main we bide the stroke—  
Either they, or we.

Three fac-similes of the ode—all different—are now before me, and I am pretty confident that I have seen a fourth:—

(1) That referred to by your correspondents, from the copy which Burns inscribed "To Mrs G. Burns from her brother, The Author," is remarkably well executed. Like the Harvard copy, it too is on a single quarto sheet. If not so careful in the punctuation as the Edinburgh copy, it is a better example of the poet's writing; and if it had been printed on better paper, it might have taken the foremost place among the lithographs of the song.

(2) Is published in Tegg's 1840 edition of the works of Robert Burns. The fac-simile occupies a page and a half of quarto paper, and as examples of the poet's writing and the lithographer's skill it is beyond fault. It is taken from the copy Burns made for Captain Miller of Dalswinton; and when the work was published the original was in the collection of Mr Robert Wallace of Kelly, M.P. The fac-simile itself was reproduced in popular form, with a portrait of Burns and an ornamental border, in 1850, by Mr Warburton, and published by Mr E. Anderson, Edinburgh.

(3) The fac-simile from the copy presented by Mr Kennedy to the city of Edinburgh, being in photograph, has a certain advantage over the others—photography, as Douglas Jerrold has it, being "justice without mercy"—the original, in its fulness, and showing all the stains of time, if not actually, is virtually before us. Like the others, it has the more prominent words written large—Burns having had such command of his quill that seemingly without an effort, he suggested the very sounds he demanded from his readers and singers.

As calligraphy the present is by no means the best performance of Burns. It is written with a soft quill, has a heavy appearance, and the sheet—folding quarto reduced—is wanting in elegance of form; and the signature, although characteristic, is heavy, cramped, and wanting in decision. It is unique, however, in having an historical note, occupying more space than the song itself, and which has not yet found its way into any edition of the poet's works.

(Why not print the postscript?)

It was not Mr Quaritch, as has been stated by several of your correspondents, but Mr B. F. Stevens, the American agent, who purchased the MS. for Mr Kennedy.—Yours, &c. W. C. ANGUS.

Kilmarnock, December 14, 1892.

SIR,—The letters from the members of the family of Gilbert Burns, which you publish in last night's *Dispatch* re "Scots Wha Hae," are calculated to mislead the public when read in the light recently thrown on the subject of Burns' autographs.

So far as I know, Mr Kennedy never claimed the MS. in the Edinburgh City Chambers to be the "original." Indeed, he could not have done so, as the MS. in question is an amended version of the song as originally written for Thomson.

It would be interesting to know what is meant by the phrase "original manuscript." Does this mean that the MS. in Mrs J. G. Burns' possession was the first copy, or perhaps the original draft, of "Scots Wha Hae?" or does it mean that hers is the only autograph copy of the ode known to exist?

There is only one way of knowing whether or not it is the "original," in the sense of being the first autograph copy, and that is by submitting a copy of it to the public.

There are in existence the "original" MS., containing a verse not to be found in the first copy sent to Thomson; Thomson's copy, with the letter referring to the song, and the holograph embodying Thomson's suggestions. These three MSS. are all "original," inasmuch as they show the various transformations through which the lyric passed before it assumed the form in which Burns left it.

My own impression is that Mrs Burns' copy is after the Thomson model. If so, it is at least three removes from the original.—I am, &c.

JOHN MUIR.

## THE PERMIT IN THE CITY MUSEUM AND BURNS MSS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

7 Seton Place, Edinburgh, December 14, 1892.

SIR,—Your remarks to-day as to the "permit" to





"Thomas Schaw," dated "Holi-rood . . . October 1745," induce me to write this note. The permit referred to, presented to the city of Edinburgh by Mr James Mackenzie, is described as being written on parchment, and having a blue silk ribbon attached to it, with the appearance of a seal having been appended to said ribbon. You add, with remarkable acumen, that "When we recollect that this document is supposed to have been issued on the very eve of the Rebels leaving Edinburgh, and that it is not a document of any great consequence, it is very improbable that Secretary Murray would have taken so much trouble as to have it written on vellum, and ornamented with ribbon and seal." Now for a genuine document of the year '45. Twelve years ago I had in my possession the whole of the papers contained in the charter-chest of Colonel Haig of Bemersyde, in preparation of a book published by Blackwood in 1881, entitled "The Haigs of Bemersyde: A Family History." The Laird of Bemersyde of 1745 was a Jacobite, and so was his father-in-law, Robertson of Ladykirk. In that year, John Murray, the Prince's secretary, wrote a letter, dated "Holy-rood-house" (observe the spelling), "22d October 1745," in which he censured "Donald Robertson of Woodsheal, Esq., in the Laird of Keppoch's Regiment," for having forcibly entered Robertson of Ladykirk's house in the Old Assembly Close. This letter had not possibly been opened for at least a hundred years until I did so; and inside I found a "protection" granted to Robertson of Ladykirk seven days after the Battle of Prestonpans. It is described by me as "a printed form, with blanks for inserting the names and dates." It was not on parchment, but on paper, "much frayed and soiled, as if it had been carried in the pocket a long while." It was as follows:—

CHARLES, Prince of Wales, etc., Regent of Scotland, England, France, and Ireland, and the Dominions thereto belonging: To all His Majesty's Officers, Civil or Military.

THESE are requiring you to protect and defend the Estate, House, and Effects of Mr Wm. Robertson of Ladykirk, from all Violence or Insult whatsoever, from any Person or Persons. Given at Holy-rood-house, the twenty-eight Day of September, 1745.

By His Highness's command,

JO. MURRAY.

It will be observed that Mr Murray does not use "Royal" before Highness, and that, neither in the letter nor the "protection," is Holyrood spelled "Holi." It stands to reason that, from the nature of things, the "permits" as well as the "protections" would be on printed forms, as the demand for both must have been constant and pressing. Vellum and blue silk ribbons and seals would have tried John Murray even more than that rascal deserved.

To revert to the Burns MSS., would you kindly allow to say, in common fairness to Mr James Mackenzie, Mr Stillie, and others, that the mere fact of a song or poem being in Burns's handwriting, but found not to have been composed by him, is no proof (of itself) that the MS. was not really Burns's. He was in the habit apparently of copying out of the magazines such

verses as struck his taste or fancy. This is shown by the fact that in Allan Cunningham's edition of Burns's poems there is printed a song entitled "To Mary," beginning:—

Could aught of song declare my pains,  
Could artful numbers move thee.  
The muse should tell, in labour'd strains,  
O Mary, how I love thee.

There are sixteen lines altogether. Allan Cunningham introduces the song thus:—

"These verses, inspired partly by Hamilton's very tender and elegant song, 'Ah, the poor shepherd's mournful fate,' and some unrecorded 'Mary' of the poet's heart, is in the latter volumes of Johnson. 'It is

inserted in Johnson's Museum,' says Sir Harris Nicolas, 'with the name of Burns attached.' He might have added that it was sent by Burns, written with his own hand."

So far Allan Cunningham. Yet the poem was not by Burns. I have marked upon my copy (a note which must have been written many years ago, but which I have since verified) that the poem is taken from the *Edinburgh Magazine* of 1774, Vol. II., p. 533, where the name of the heroine, however, is "Delia," and not "Mary." Burns was then only fifteen years of age, and the style is far above his earlier attempts at verse. Evidently it was a copy which he had made on some occasion when the magazine was in his hands. All this is, of course, of little importance, except in the way of urging caution as to deciding upon the genuineness or otherwise of MSS. alleged to be in Burns's handwriting.—I am, &c.

JOHN RUSSELL.

#### THE UNHISTORICAL MSS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

Edinburgh, December 14, 1892.

SIR,—In confirmation of Mr H. T. Morland Simpson's remarks in the *Dispatch* of the 12th, under the heading of "More Unhistorical MSS.," allow me to note that Richard Cameron, the Covenanter, and founder of the sect that afterwards bore his name, died, as stated, at Airmoss or Ayrswood, on 20th July 1680, after having declared war against the King, on the 20th of June, at the Cross of Sanguinar. The skirmish at Airmoss was brief, but he and his small band of followers behaved with great bravery. He was amongst the slain. His body was buried there; whilst his head and hands were cut off and carried to Edinburgh along with the prisoners. His father was then imprisoned for non-conformity, and recognised the relics of his son when shown to him. The old man is reported to have exclaimed:—"I know, I know them; they are my son's, my own dear son's. It is the Lord; good is the will of the Lord, who cannot wrong me or mine; but has made goodness and mercy to follow us all our days." "The head and hands were then and there fixed upon the Netherbow Port, the fingers pointing upwards in mockery of the attitude of prayer."

The date of his birth at Falkland is not given, but, as stated, he was schoolmaster and preceptor of the parish under the Episcopal clergyman. Converted by the field preachers he became an enthusiastic votary of the Presbyterian system, resigned these offices, and went to reside as preceptor in the family of Scott of Harden, but was compelled to remove because he refused to attend the ministrations of the parish minister. Meeting Mr John Welch he was persuaded by him to accept a licence as a preacher, which was conferred upon him by Mr Welch and another Protestant clergyman in the town of Haughheads, Roxburghshire. In 1677 he was reproved at a meeting in Edinburgh of the Presbyterian clergy for the freedom with which he asserted the spiritual independence of the Scottish Church. He then retired to Holland, where he was ordained, and returned to Scotland in 1680, and lost his life as stated on 20th July of the same year.

It is evident, therefore, that whatever his age he was not associated with the Covenanters' party in 1666. Nor was he publicly allied with the cause till about ten years later. He could not sign the declaration at Carstairs on 14th August 1680, for at that time his severed hands were pointing heavenward on the Netherbow Port. His signature at the dates given must be a forgery.—I am, &c.

R. P. R.





EDINBURGH, FRIDAY, December 16, 1892.

A second arrest has been made in connection with the spurious historic MSS.—William Blair, described as a tea dealer.

He passed the bar of the Edinburgh Police Court this morning charged with having uttered as genuine forged documents.

One of our artists was present and took his portrait, which we give.

### THE MSS. FORGERIES.

#### ANOTHER ARREST.

THE Edinburgh police, acting on a Magistrate's warrant, last night arrested a man named William Blair, a traveller for a London firm, on a charge of having uttered as genuine forged documents. Blair, who is about thirty-seven years old, was apprehended in Rose Street by Superintendent Bain, assisted by Detective Officers Frew and John Smith. The arrest is in connection with the manufacture of historic and Burns MSS., for an alleged part in which "Antique" Smith was apprehended a fortnight ago.

#### THE PRISONER IN THE POLICE COURT.

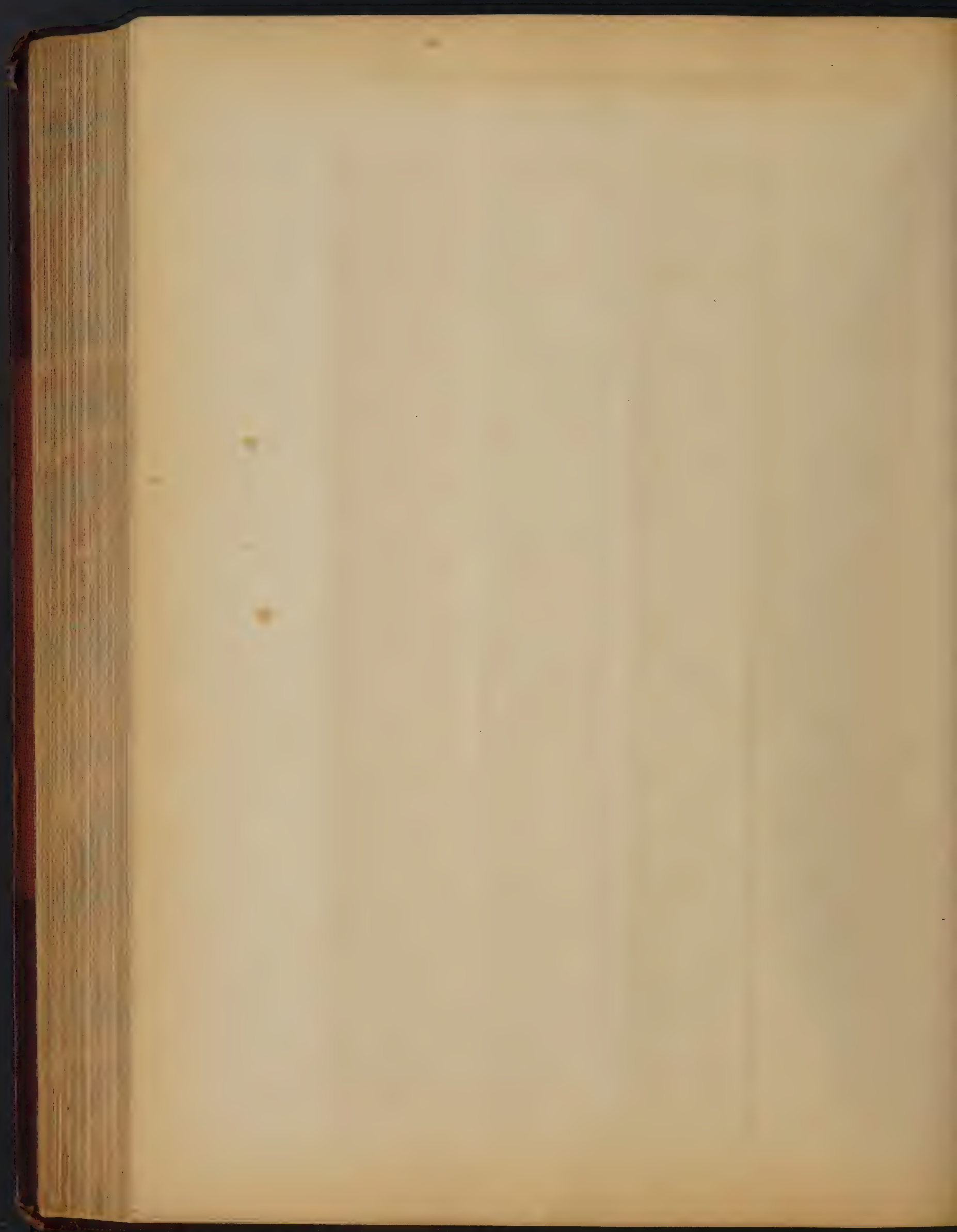
Blair, who was described as thirty-seven years of age, a tea agent, with no fixed residence, passed the bar of the Police Court this forenoon, he having been "apprehended on a Magistrate's warrant charged with uttering as genuine forged documents." The procedure was purely formal. The Clerk (Mr Weston) said—Are you William Blair? The prisoner replied—Yes. The Clerk—He is to be remitted charged with forgery. Bailie Gulland then uttered the single word "Remit," and the prisoner was taken back to the cells, on his way to the Procurator-Fiscal. Blair, who seemed to fix all his attention on what was going on, and in doing so knitted his eyebrows nervously, was quietly but somewhat shabbily dressed, without any overcoat, and, though of good appearance, seemed somewhat careworn. Superintendent Bain, Inspector Frew, and Detective Smith arrested him at 6.40 last night, it seems. When brought to the main office he had in his pockets 4½d., a pin, pawn-tickets, and some other articles. The charge is exactly the same, it may be added, as that on which A. H. Smith was arrested.

#### SMITH COMMITTED FOR TRIAL.

Alexander Howland Smith has now been formally committed for trial, and it rests with the Crown authorities to say whether his case will be taken before the High Court of Justiciary or in the Sheriff Court.



The above is a portrait of William Blair. It was taken by our artist while Blair was passing the bar at the Edinburgh Police Court this morning.





# THE MSS.

## ANOTHER MISSING LINK.

ONE of our Glasgow reporters called yesterday upon Mr D. Sneddon at his office in that city, and in the course of some conversation Mr Sneddon expressed his astonishment at a hard-headed people like the Scots losing their heads over a simple matter like buying and selling. The buying of a MS. was, like the buying of a house, a business transaction; and as the story of the life of the former proprietors stuck to a house, so did that of the former holders of historic properties; and, being strongly impressed with this view (which was the view of the antiquary who made it a point to give the localities of his finds), he had, as far as possible—and he thought the interest of his book was thereby increased—given the history of the "Burns Holograph Manuscripts in the Kilmarnock Museum." Mr Sneddon's book is an octavo extending to 155 pages, in the style of the first Kilmarnock Edition of the Poems. The text is that of the MSS. in the Museum, but the work is enriched with notes giving any important variations that may occur in the standard editions of the Poet. Mr Sneddon has taken a great interest in the disclosures in the *Dispatch*, and he is satisfied that when the market has been cleared of the fraudulent paper all will be as before—only the demand for genuine MSS. will be, he thinks, increased with the education of public opinion consequent on the disclosures.

Mr Sneddon being a member of the Kilmarnock Burns Monument Museum Committee, and having been associated with the purchase of the MSS., was the proper person to be approached by the Traveller in Ayrshire in search of Thomas Breck, the missing correspondent of Burns in Kilmarnock. Accordingly, Mr James Mackenzie, F.S.A. Scot., made a pilgrimage to the Kilmarnock shrine, and this "collector," who is not "a dealer," thinking the museum the proper place for planting his wares, wrote to Mr Sneddon as follows (the italics are ours):—

Edinburgh, 45 Forrest Road, March 7, 1892.

Mr D. Sneddon.

DEAR SIR,—When spending some little time at Kilmarnock, and going through your nice Burns monument, I got a copy of list of Burns MSS. compiled by you, and was also informed that you took an interest in all such relating to the Poet. The purpose of my letter is to state that, should you be in Edinburgh, I will be glad to show you about as many as you have in the museum. Some copies of the same in the Poet's writing, others unpublished, and one—so far as I can discover, the only one—of "Scots Wha Hae" as forwarded by Burns to Thomson from Dumfries in September 1793, with letter on the other side in which he mentions having sent a copy to Thomson, and asks the party at Tarbolton *not* [the italics here are Mr Mackenzie's] to show the copy sent him except to his own special friends.

*It is just possible I may be disposing of them in one lot for some private or public library. I thought to let you know of these in case you might be in our good city.*

Can you inform me if any list exists of the books which composed the Poet's library; also, how many copies you know of in the Poet's writing of the following—viz., "The Cotter's Saturday Night," "The Holy Fair," "Tam o' Shanter," "Halloween," "Man was made to Mourn," "The Twa Dogs," "The Twa Brigs," "Address to J. Smith," "Holy Willie's Prayer," "The Twa Herds," and (if you know of one) "The Poor Man's Prayer," consisting of twenty-three verses; "The Sophist," about half that number.—I remain, yours very truly,

(Signed) JAMES MACKENZIE.

P.S.—The above are all in my collection, while some others of the unpublished might interest you.

Mr Mackenzie, it will be noticed, here includes in his list an "Address to J. Smith," when the fact is that the original is in the Kilmarnock Museum.

In reply to the above letter, Mr Sneddon wrote saying that he was in Edinburgh frequently, and would call on Mr Mackenzie, to which letter he received the following answer:—

Edinburgh, 45 Forrest Road, March 15, 1892.

Mr Sneddon.

DEAR SIR,—[After health reference]—I am glad to learn that you visit our grand city each month, and I shall be glad to see you and let you examine my collection of Burns MSS. I will be glad to have a P.C. before you come, to make sure that I do not miss you when you call. I hope to be able to show you something that may interest you, and to hear your opinion of them.

I have one on which the Poet writes—"To my Friend

"Thomas Breck,

Kilmarnock,"

and on the back is written, by another possessor—

"Given me by Mr John Breck, Kilmarnock, 1818."

Can you help me to discover who this was—or likely

to be? The date is, "Mossgiel, April 1785."

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) JAMES MACKENZIE.

Mr Sneddon, knowing as he does "the oldest inhabitant," and not having found any trace of this correspondent of the Poet, and in view of the large quantity of MSS. offered in the first letter, coupled as it was with a request for his opinion regarding MSS. in Mr Mackenzie's possession, thought it expedient to stop the correspondence. He subsequently received the following communication:—

Edinburgh, 45 Forrest Road, 13th June 1892.

DEAR SIR,—Some time ago a lady in Wales wrote me about a piece of statuary by Currie of Burns and the Muse, which has been exhibited, and you may have seen years ago. Her husband when residing in Scotland bought it, and on his removal took it with him. Since his death his widow is inclined to dispose of it, and I gave her your address, thinking the subject a good one for the Monument grounds at Kilmarnock. Since then I have not had any letter from her. I have always been expecting to have had a call from you, when in Edinburgh, to see my MSS. of Burns. Since I wrote you last there have been some letters in the *Scotsman* as to some which have been reported to be doubtful. To put it mildly, I have been most anxious to discover any of these, and at last have succeeded in getting hold of one, named, and now that I have it, I cannot find any whom I consider judges to say that it is other than genuine. It has now come to light that the party who has been behind the letters in the *Scotsman* was wise enough to withhold his real name, as that alone would seem enough to settle the worth of his remarks. But one gentleman did put his name to one of these, and he is said by others to have been mistaken. I would, therefore, like you to see this one in particular and those which are unpublished to see what you think of them.—I remain, yours truly,

(Signed) JAMES MACKENZIE.

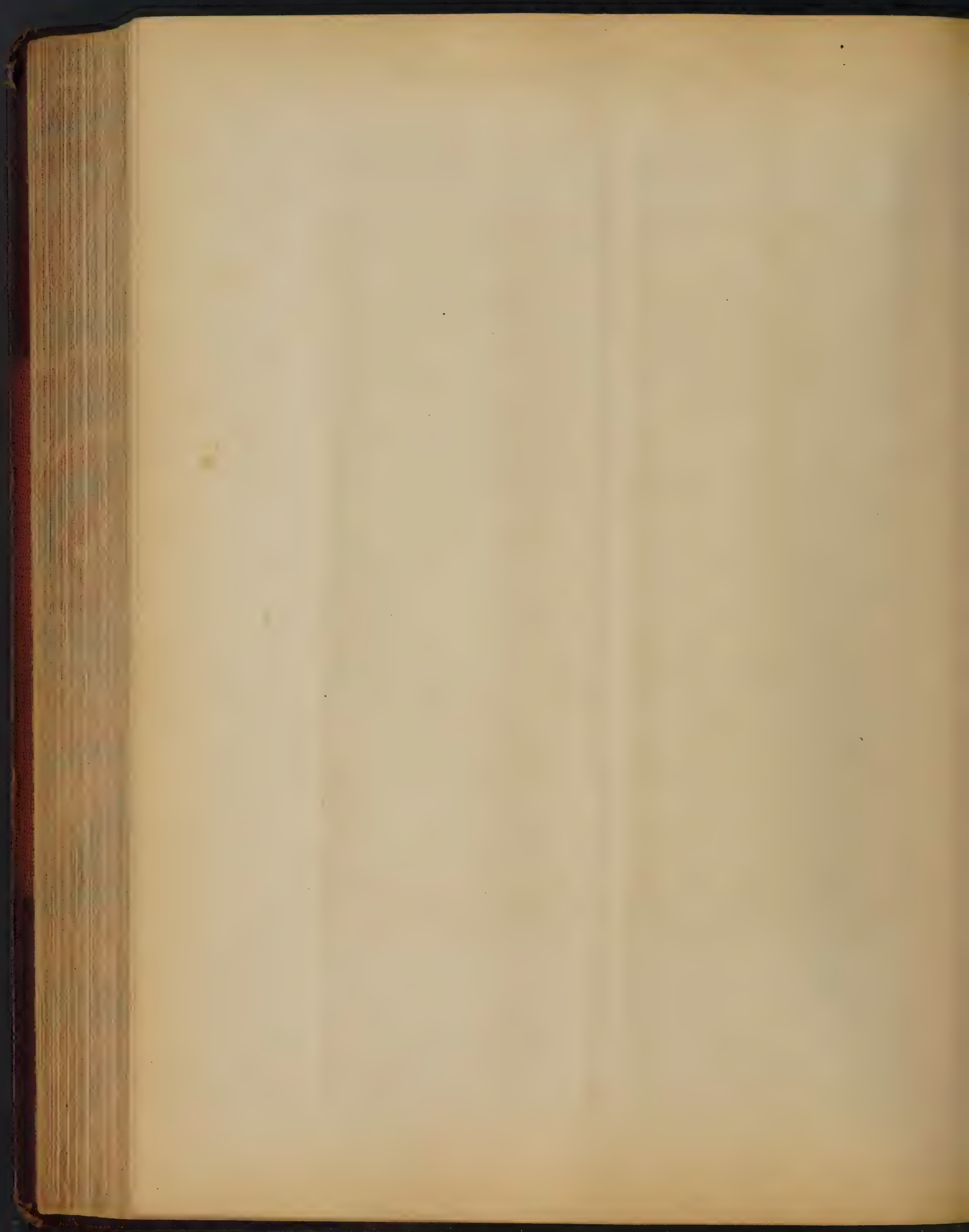
D. Sneddon, Esq., Dean Cottage, Kilmarnock.

Mr Sneddon having seen the Cumnock correspondence, and with the view of bringing the "John Hill" letter under the notice of the Kilmarnock Committee, wrote to Mr Mackenzie asking him to forward the letter, to which he received the following reply:—

Edinburgh, 45 Forrest Road, 16th August 1892.

DEAR SIR,—I have your letter of yesterday's date, and also another on the same purpose. I am rather at a loss, however, with yours, as I wrote you soon after my last visit to Kilmarnock, and offered to let you see this and much else. You replied and promised to call soon, as you were in Edinburgh any month. Since then I have written you on two occasions, but had no reply from you to these letters. I naturally concluded that you had put you all that you cared for, hence your non-fulfilment of promise. Had you cared to see them you could have seen this also long ago.

I may state, however, the letter at present in question I intended to go with the copy of Wilkie's Poems which Nicol gave to Burns on his early visit to Edinburgh, as stated by the poet on the fly-leaf, while his name (Burns) is on two places of the book. It was not for sale, but I will tell you, as I have told the other gentleman wanting it, I will sell the two if I get a fair offer for them. I do not mean by





this anything unreasonable. These may be seen *here* in any case by those interested.—I remain, yours truly,  
(Signed) JAMES MACKENZIE.  
D. Sneddon, Esq., Kilmarnock.

#### THE INVESTIGATIONS OF A CHEMICAL EXPERT.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]  
Royston, Granton, near Edinburgh,  
December 15, 1892.

SIR,—For obvious reasons it would be inexpedient to make your columns the medium for diffusing the "details" of the various means employed in the manipulation of such "fabricated" documents as you have sent me for examination, when even the statement of the processes used for their detection by chemical means or otherwise might help in their further production.

The main object I had in view was to determine the age or dates of these writings. With ordinary documents written with ordinary ink on ordinary paper this is a matter of no very great difficulty; but the forged documents you handed to me were *extraordinary*, in so far as most of these ordinary conditions were altered, and that with great skill.

The "expert" had so prepared and used a writing ink for the execution of his work that the compound of gallic or tannic acid with salts of iron, forming ordinary writing ink, had been partially decomposed, so that to the eye and to ordinary chemical tests it represented ancient writing. Fortunately, this part of the deception was incomplete, seeing all the writings *now represent one age*, and do not differ, according to the different dates they bear. The paper used has also been the object of great care, in some cases having evidently been obtained from books or bound documents (the needle holes incidental to binding being quite apparent), whilst the outward "mask of age" has been obtained by the help of infusions of tea or other yellow colouring matters which is readily removed by bleaching agents.

In the two oldest documents—viz., the letters of "George Monck" and "Montrose" (1644 and 1654)—the paper has been steamed so as to remove the sizing material, and so produce the roughened surface of old hand-made papers—so much so, that any attempt to write upon them now has the same effect as writing on blotting-paper. Naturally the paper could not have been in such a condition when the writings now present were executed.

When examined under the microscope there seems evidence that the Burns receipt to the Distributor of Stamps, Dumfries, for £3, 6s., dated 1793, has been written with a STEEL PEN!

The weakest part of the deception is shown in the poor attempt to imitate the "deckle" strap mark (so characteristic of hand-made paper, and often noticed

on bank notes), by fraying out the edges of these productions.

Even with all these anomalous conditions I would have been exceedingly cautious of giving a definite opinion as to the fraudulent character of all the documents you sent me, were it not that in *all* of them, with dates ranging from 1644 to 1793, the same ink has been used, and that of a character quite unlike anything I have ever observed in any documents I have before examined.

If it is worth while carrying on this very interesting investigation I may trouble you with some more details later on.—I am, &c.

ROBERT IRVINE, F.C.S.

#### *Documents Examined.*

Letter—"George Monck," dated at Dalkeith, 1654.

Letter—"Montrose," dated at Aberdeen, 1644.

An "Ode"—"How sleep the brave who sink to rest." No date. Signed ROBT. BURNS.

Receipt given to the Distributor of Stamps, Dumfries, for £3, 6s. 9d., dated 17th March 1793. Sgd. ROBT. BURNS.

[We have to thank Mr Irvine for his very valuable and interesting testimony.]

#### "SCOTS WHA HAE."

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]  
3 Belford Park, Edinburgh,  
December 15, 1892.

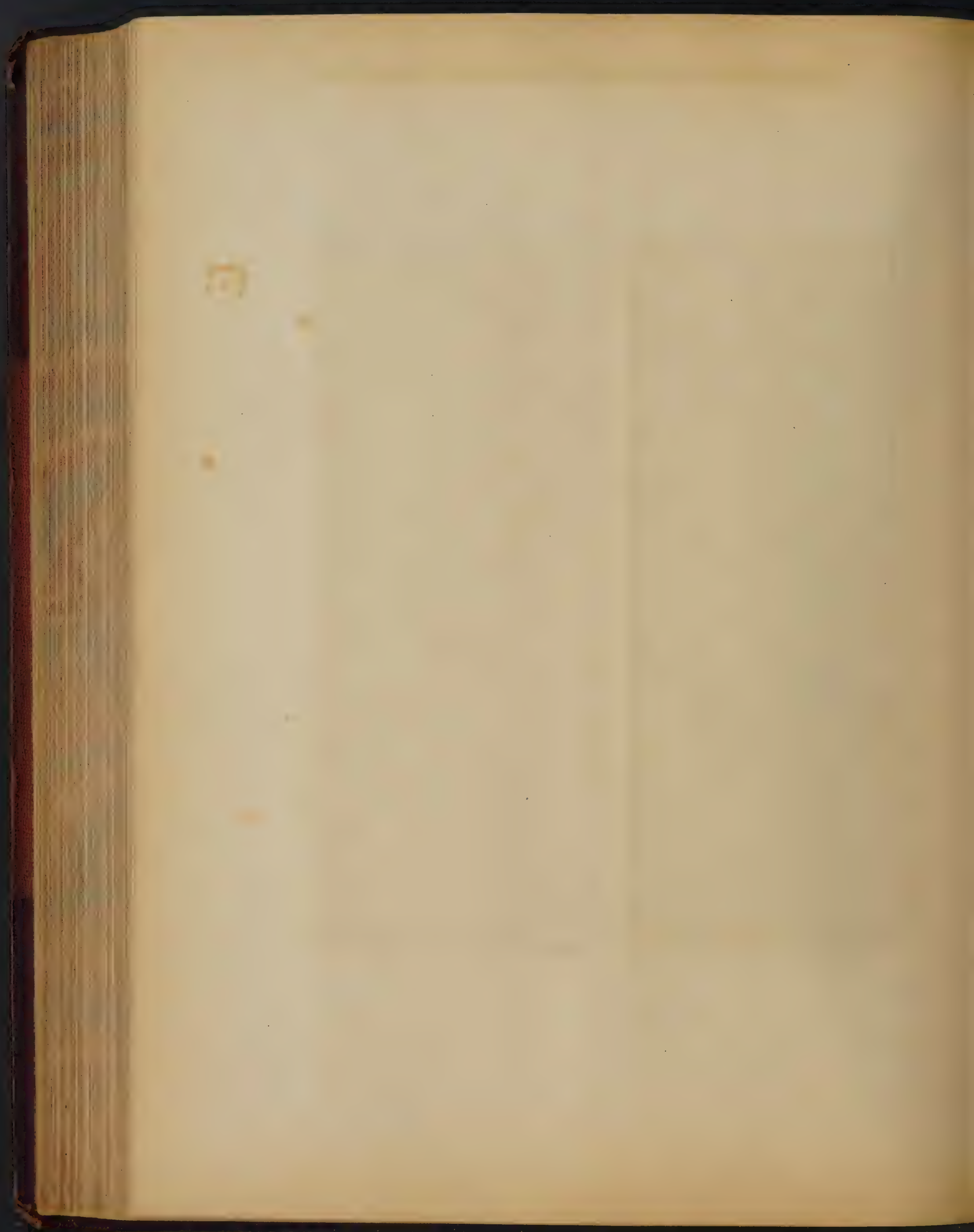
SIR,—Will you allow me to make the following observations with reference to the correspondence on this subject which appeared in your impressions of Wednesday and yesterday, and to the editorial note in Tuesday's paper, in so far as they relate to the letters of Mr Andrew's correspondents?

It is very probable, as I indicated in my letter to Mr Andrew of the 11th inst., that there are several genuine autographs of this famous Ode in existence, and that the MS. in the City Chambers is one of these. At the same time, it would be very satisfactory that the history of that MS. should now be made known. I do not doubt Mr Brown's judgment as an expert, but that judgment should be fortified by an authentic history of the MS. No doubt your correspondent Mr Muir would, from his learned knowledge on the subject, be able to supply this, or could easily procure the means of doing so.

This autograph should, as I have already suggested, be compared with Mrs Burns' one; and Mr Andrew says he believes he would have no difficulty in arranging with her for having this done in some convenient way. In the meantime an exact copy of it could no doubt be got from her through Mr Andrew, as suggested by Mr Muir.

In the editorial note in Wednesday's paper, you remark that the letter of Mr Andrew's New Zealand correspondent, printed in Tuesday's paper, might lead to the inference that Mr Kennedy was paid for his gift to the Town Council; but if you will refer to that letter you will see that it is the cutting from the *Scotsman* quoted at the commencement of it, and not the letter itself, which suggests that inference.—I am, &c.

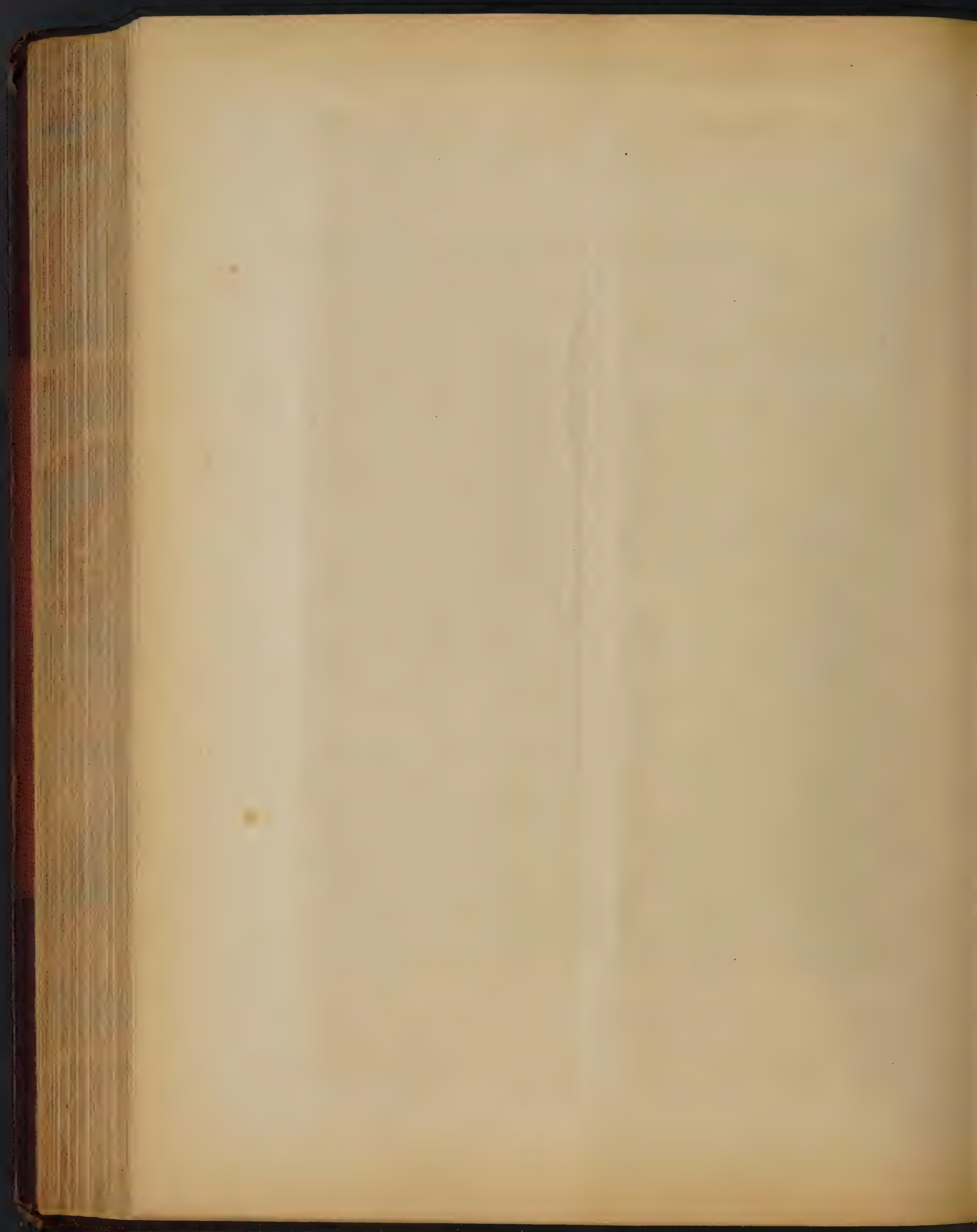
W. MACGILLIVRAY.





It is perhaps unnecessary to say that the judgment of the High Court of Justiciary this morning, in the petition of Smith to restrain the *Evening Dispatch* from publishing certain things, is one which of course we shall loyally observe. At the same time, with all respect to the honourable Court, we may be allowed to direct attention to the immense importance of that judgment as it affects the liberty of the press, and to urge that the precedent which has now been set by the Supreme Court is fraught with the most serious consequences to all publicists. Whatever may be the law on the subject—and on that point their Lordships are far and away the best authorities—certainly the universal journalistic custom has been to publish statements affecting pending cases, whether civil or criminal, so long as these statements were matters of fact, and were not directly associated with particular persons under committal for trial. Thus in the Rainhill or other murders no journal has hitherto hesitated to publish any new discoveries or important clues bearing on the cases in point; but if the new precedent is to rule, journalists dare not do so any longer. All the privileges are to be on the side of the accused persons, and the disadvantages and restrictions upon that of the people. In the particular case under review to-day, we acted upon the well understood journalistic rule of severely repressing all reference which might bear upon any person or persons who might be under arrest or committed for trial. Up to that point we were entitled, at our own risk and in the public interest, to refer to them. After that they were ignored, and no suggestion was made associating any person with an offence, save in one vague case, which was explained in Court. What we did was to record fresh discoveries of certain documents, and to publish the judgment of the British Museum authorities thereon. If inferentially that judgment should bear prejudicially upon any person, whether in custody or not, the journalistic contention has been that it was his misfortune that such should be the case. The position,

however, is now altered, and the journalist will not dare to chronicle any matter, however slight, should a prisoner assert that it has the remotest bearing on his character or case. Where, we ask, is the line to be drawn? A discussion has been going on in our columns respecting certain copies of "Scots Wha Hae." Is a public journal not to be entitled to discuss such matters because some gentleman of the name of Jones or Brown may be in prison charged with concocting some other and very different document? Take another case. A very important, and we may say startling, discovery has just been made in this city of books which have been fraudulently manipulated and sold to the public on pretence that they are old and of historic interest. Are we, are other journalists, to be forbidden to disclose practices which are scandalous and disgraceful simply because some man may allege a connection with him or his case? Does this not look like muzzling the public voice in the interest of a privileged class—namely, prisoners? If we are to be restrained from disclosing this newest and latest form of fraud, is there not a serious danger lest offenders should escape punishment? We have every sympathy with and respect for the determination of the High Court to protect each accused person and secure him a fair trial; and in this the public judgment will be thoroughly with their Lordships. We have never had any desire but that the special case to which they referred should be probed, and probed righteously, to the very deepest depths—and they are very deep—and we contend that we have done much to secure this fair trial, and that without our aid the authorities would not have taken action, for they had failed to do so when asked. There are cases when Justice is unfortunately blind; whether the present is one of them or not we shall leave to others to judge. But at least we have said enough to point out the gravity to the whole journalistic profession of the restraining order now issued by the High Court.





## Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.

EDINBURGH, SATURDAY, December 17, 1892.

### SUMMARY OF TO-DAY'S NEWS.

THE application to restrain the *Evening Dispatch* from publishing articles on the MSS. forgeries pending the trial of Smith, came up in the High Court to-day.

THE Court, after hearing arguments, granted the application.

THE ground of their decision was that after the case had passed into the hands of the police authorities the function of the journal was at an end.

### THE "EVENING DISPATCH" AND THE MSS. FORGERIE.

AT the sitting of the High Court of Justiciary yesterday—the Lord Justice-Clerk, Lords Rutherford Clark and Trayner on the bench—a note was presented on behalf of A. H. Smith, at present in custody on a charge relating to the MSS. forgeries which have been exposed in the *Dispatch*, craving the Court to restrain the *Dispatch* from publishing further articles on the subject until after his trial on the ground that the continued publication of articles would be prejudicial to the fair trial of the prisoner. After hearing counsel for the respondents, the Court ordered the petition to be intimated to the respondents, and also ordered them to appear by counsel this morning at the bar.

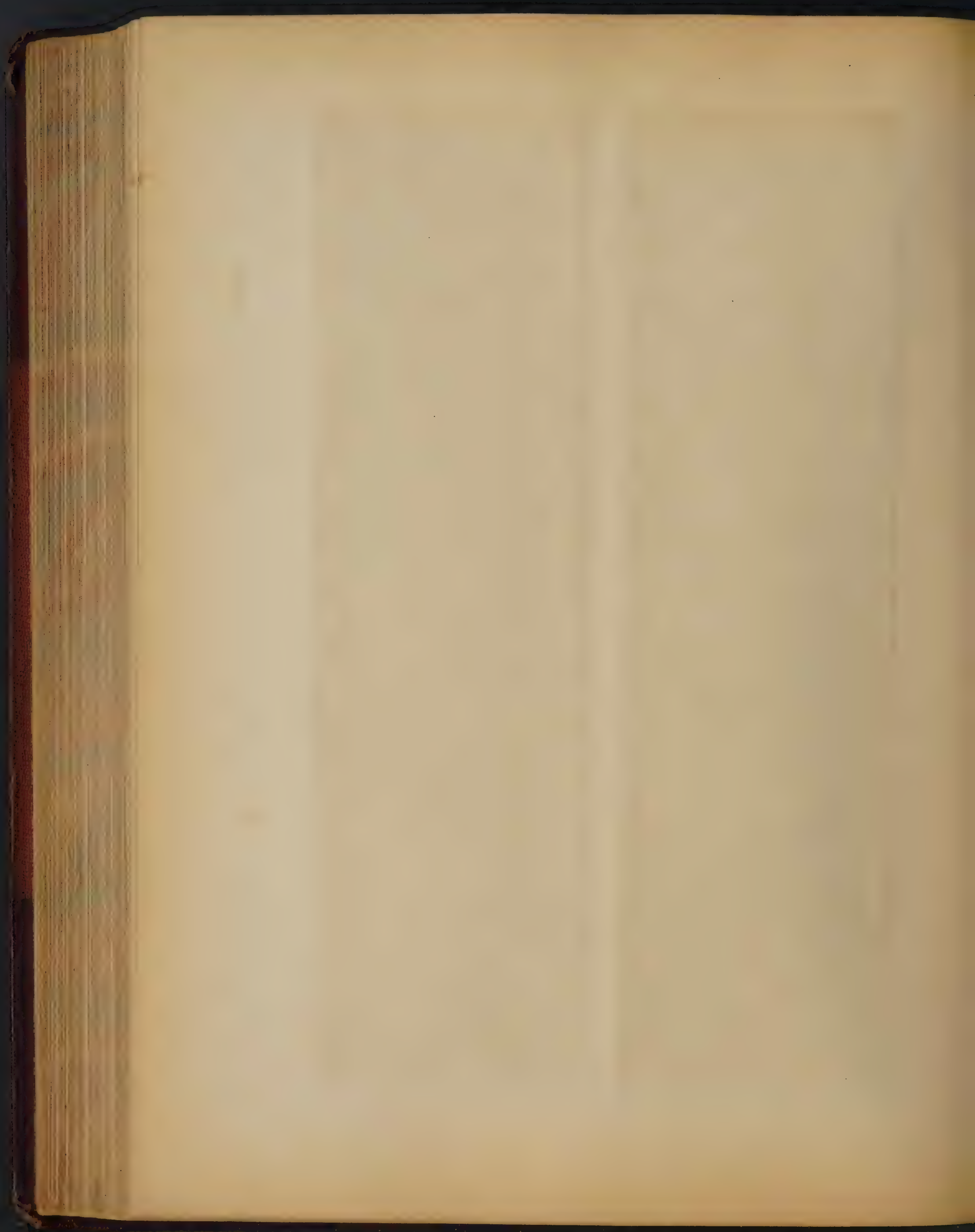
### THE CASE IN COURT TO-DAY.

On the petition being called this morning there were on the bench the Lord Justice-Clerk, Lord Trayner, and Lord Kincairney, the latter having taken the place of Lord Rutherford Clark, who is said to be indisposed. Mr Dewar appeared for the petitioner, and Mr Cooper for the respondents.

MR COOPER, for the respondents, submitted that this application by the petitioner should not be granted for two reasons—first, because in the form it was presented it was quite incompetent; and secondly, that even if it were competent it was too vague for the Court to pronounce upon. Of course, he did not for a moment dispute their Lordships' right to deal with matters of contempt of Court, but he must emphatically dispute their right to interfere with publication of anything that a newspaper chose to publish so long as it did not amount to contempt. In this case he admitted that it would be contempt of Court if the *Evening Dispatch* took to criticising the evidence against the panel Smith, and to insinuating indirectly that Smith was the utterer of the forged documents, pretending that they were real; but the fact was since Mr Smith, the petitioner, was arrested on the 5th December, the *Evening Dispatch* had been very careful to omit his name from all discussion of those manuscript frauds. On one occasion only since that date had the *Dispatch* mentioned his name, and that was *per incuriam*. On the 7th December, in the paragraph referred to by Mr Smith in the complaint, the *Dispatch* undoubtedly referred to "Antique Smith's" handwriting in connection with the manuscripts which they then had before them. But he could give an explanation with regard to that single inadvertent reference. It was headed "300 Original MSS.," and then proceeded—

When the London experts challenged Mr Skille's Burns MSS., he issued a counter blast containing an innuendo against "English Papers and Catalogues." According to this document Mr Skille had passed through his hands "upwards of 300 original MSS. of Burns." A list of the titles and purchasers' names would be interesting, but as this is a large order, we shall meantime be content if he will produce the document from which he took this *fac-simile* of Burns's signature. Notwithstanding the cocksureness of Mr Skille, we have come to the conclusion that the *fac-simile* in the counter blast, which we give below, represents the doubting weakness of "Antique" Smith, and not the strength and certainty of the Poet's quill.

The reference to "Antique" Smith was inserted there *per incuriam*. This paragraph was received by the editor of the *Dispatch* several days before Mr Smith was arrested, and he delayed inserting the paragraph because he had to get his artist to reproduce the signature of Robert Burns, which was reproduced in the newspaper. He got that reproduced and put in this paragraph, and by mistake he admitted into print the single reference to Smith's "antique" hand. With that single exception the discussion in the *Evening Dispatch* since the time that Smith was arrested had been purely upon the question of these manuscript frauds in general. He submitted that it would be beyond their Lordships' power and province to suppress the publication of the discussion upon a subject like this, because on question had been arrested. Let them take the case of a man arrested for murder. It had never been suggested that newspapers were, after the arrest of the man, to be prevented from giving reports of the discoveries from day to day with regard to the murderer's career. He then instanced the case of the Rainhill murders, and said it was never suggested for a moment that it was contempt of Court to publish after Deeming was in prison on trial of murder the discovery of bodies in places visited by Deeming. This matter of the manuscript frauds was a most important one for Edinburgh, and for, practically, the literary world. He might mention that since Mr Smith was arrested a distinguished collector in America was on the point of paying £100 for manuscripts in this country of Burns, Scott, and other persons. The agents of the gentleman in this country, who was to purchase those manuscripts, in consequence of what was being said in the *Dispatch*, submitted the manuscripts to the British Museum authorities, and after they had been examined they were found to be spurious. Those facts were published in the *Evening Dispatch*. There were innumerable cases of that sort. In one publication the *Dispatch* gave a list of unhistorical MSS. Were their Lordships to prevent the *Evening Dispatch* from publishing documents of that description? Were their Lordships to prevent the *Evening Dispatch* from discussing the question of literary frauds. He had there a manuscript which had been sent in that day, in which it was proposed to discuss literary frauds which took place in the middle of last century. Were their Lordships to prevent the publication of that? He demurred to the application in the terms in which it was asked. They were asked to prohibit the respondents from publishing or circulating any statement relative to the alleged forgeries. The *Evening Dispatch* had never suggested that all these forgeries now existing in this country and elsewhere were the handiwork of the prisoner Smith. Since the time Smith was arrested no reference had been made to him except in the single instance he had told them of. Their Lordships had been further asked to prohibit the editor of the *Dispatch* from publishing anything prejudicial to the prisoner, A. H. Smith, until the proceedings connected with his trial had been brought to a conclusion. But how was the editor to know what their Lordships would cover. Of course the editor did not intend, and never had intended, to incur their Lordships' penalties by committing contempt of Court, and in what had been published in the *Dispatch* since Smith's arrest he had been very careful that no such thing should be committed. But the present application to the Court was a perfectly general application, and the editor would never be for a moment safe if he put the word MSS. into the paper. Supposing the application were granted, and manuscripts of Juvenal or Virgil were brought to light, the editor would not be able to report them. Now, he understood that the only case which Mr Dewar had been able, with all his diligence, to discover in his favour was the case of Emond as far back as 1829. The report of the case was extremely short, but there was sufficient reported to show that the case was entirely different from the petition in question. In the Emond case a man was in custody on a charge of murder, and in the application which had been made on his behalf, it was complained that since his committal various statements had been published relative to his case. But in the case of the *Dispatch* there was no statement published relative to the case of Smith after his apprehension. Continuing, Mr Cooper said since the time Smith was in the Emond case, the complaint was that statements had been published after his committal as to the evidence to be adduced against him, and as to the supposed motives





by which he was thought to be actuated. But that case was entirely different from the case in hand, because in it the publication complained of related directly to matters in the case. He submitted that a distinction existed between matters which did not refer to a case before the Court, and matters which had a general public bearing, and which in no way referred to the prisoner Smith. Further, he submitted that the case was utterly incompetent, and that their Lordships ought to refuse the application. Of course, he was willing to put in an undertaking that the *Evening Dispatch* would not publish anything prejudicial to Smith. It had not done so in the past, and it did not intend to do so.

The LORD JUSTICE-CLERK—What is your objection to the competency.

Mr COOPER said he objected to their Lordships' right to consider anything beyond contempt of Court in a case of that kind. If Mr Smith had any objection to the publication of the matters complained of, apart from any objection that could be taken on the ground of contempt of Court, he maintained that the recourse was in the Bill Chamber.

The LORD JUSTICE-CLERK—But the case of Emond appears to be on all fours with this case we are considering as regards the question of competency. In Emond's case it was an application to the Court to prevent the publication of statements prejudicial to the prisoner before his trial.

Mr COOPER said the distinction he drew was this—that in the case of Emond the publications complained of directly bore upon the prisoner's case, whereas in the case of the *Dispatch* the publications did not.

The LORD JUSTICE-CLERK—But the competency of these proceedings does not depend on the sufficiency of the statements complained of. Assuming that statements have been made in the *Dispatch*, which would in the language of the judgment in Emond's case be relative to the alleged charge against Smith and prejudicial to the prisoner, would it not then be competent for the Court to deal with an application of this kind?

Mr COOPER—I think that a great deal might be said for the competency of an application in the event which your Lordship assumes.

The LORD JUSTICE-CLERK—Then the real objection is not to the competency of the note, but that no relative facts have been stated to entitle us as a Court to act as the Court acted in the case of Emond.

Mr COOPER (proceeding) said he wished their Lordships to understand the distinction he drew. He admitted their Lordships' competency to deal with any matters which inferred contempt of Court, but he objected to their Lordships' competency in Justiciary to consider what was practically an application for interdict against the publication of what might be libellous documents. He maintained that Mr Smith, if he thought he had been aggrieved by these publications, must go to the Bill Chamber and must get interdict there against the *Dispatch* if he could show that matter was being published prejudicial to his case as a prisoner awaiting trial.

Mr DEWAR, for the petitioner, said he contended that their Lordships had jurisdiction in the matter. From the moment that a prisoner was apprehended, the protection of his person was under the control of the criminal authorities, and the protection of his rights as a prisoner was under the protection of that Court. One of the rights of a prisoner was that he should have a fair trial, and if he could in that case show that the rights of the prisoner in question had been tampered with, then he submitted that their Lordships had jurisdiction to stop it in that Court as a competent Court. Counsel for the respondents had told him that the name of the prisoner had only been once mentioned in the *Dispatch* after his apprehension. He admitted that, but he desired to state that after that mention had been made of the prisoner's name in the *Dispatch* they had written to the *Dispatch* asking them to stop further publication. The publishers and editor of the *Dispatch* did not answer that note; they had not then given the prisoner's counsel the explanation which was offered now—that it was by mistake that the prisoner's name had crept into the paper. After that time it was true the *Dispatch* had never mentioned the prisoner's name but they had by implication very obviously damaged the prisoner's defence. He

referred their Lordships chiefly to an article which appeared in the *Dispatch* on the 9th December—that was four days after the prisoner was apprehended. His name, it was true, was not mentioned, but this heading had been given to the statement, "The Forger and His Prey." Yesterday he had pointed out that the *Dispatch* had so closely connected the man Smith with the forgeries that it was impossible to doubt to whom that statement referred. In that statement it was said, "For the sake of his petty gains the forger has succeeded in harassing professional and business men all over the world." The writer then went on to give instances of eight classes of people who had been injured by the forgeries.

Lord TRAYNER—That seems to be a letter addressed to the editor of the *Dispatch*.

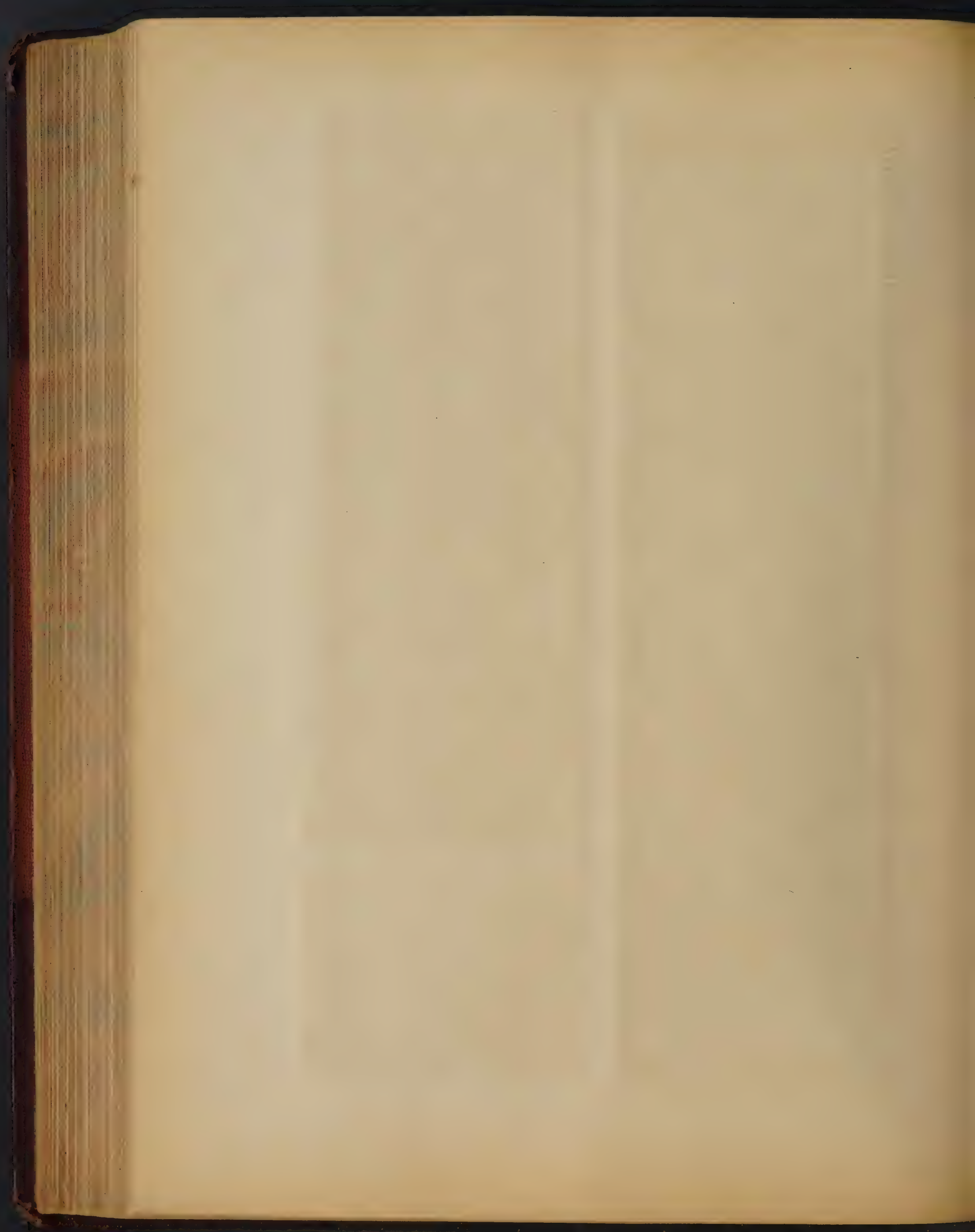
Mr DEWAR—Yes, my Lord, but it is incorporated in an article dealing with the whole subject. Continuing, Mr Dewar said the statement in question went on to tell the different people who had been injured by the forgeries. Now, he assumed that the trial of Smith was to be a jury trial, because the charge was adjudged so serious that bail had been refused, and the jury, whoever they might be, were already in possession of this fact, that the different classes of men referred to had been seriously injured by the forgers. Further, no later than the previous (Friday) night, and after the proceedings in that Court had taken place, matter had been published in the *Dispatch* relating to the MSS. forgeries.

The LORD JUSTICE-CLERK—But was it not published earlier in the day before the case came before us?

Mr DEWAR—Yes; no doubt it was published in the earlier editions, but it was also published in the four o'clock edition after the case had been dealt with in this Court. Proceeding, counsel said the matter published in the previous day's *Dispatch* contained what was headed "The Investigations of a Chemical Expert," and in it was given what purported to be a deliverance of this expert on a number of documents which had been sent to him for investigation. This expert came, according to the statement, to the conclusion that the documents in question were all forged, and a list of these documents was appended. Now, he contended it was not material whether the prisoner was to be charged with forging these very documents or not, for if, on the one hand, he was to be tried for forging them, it was clearly quite improper for the *Dispatch* to refer to them as it had; and, on the other hand, if he was not, it was just as improper that the *Dispatch* in dealing with the subject should mention other forged documents about which it was telling the jury that if the prisoner had not forged them there were other documents which the prisoner was supposed to have forged. Besides that, there was another matter to which he wished to refer, although in this case the publication of it had no doubt been on the day before the apprehension of the prisoner. On the 4th December the *Dispatch* unearthed from the records of the Court the circumstance that the prisoner had previously been charged with embezzlement, but had been acquitted of the charge. On the day in question the *Dispatch* had set forth the whole story of that matter. Now, he thought that was a most improper proceeding on the part of the *Dispatch*, because, although Smith had been acquitted of the charge, the jury, if it had read the *Dispatch*'s story, could not blot from their minds the fact that Smith had formerly been charged with embezzlement. The jury, as a matter of fact, was not entitled to know that the man had been in trouble before, even although he had been acquitted.

Lord TRAYNER—But these things were published before Smith's apprehension. The most of that which you were complaining of yesterday had been published before his apprehension. It had therefore no bearing on the present petition, because the public press is quite entitled, if it charges a man with forgery, for the protection and in the interests of the public, to state what his character was.

Mr DEWAR said he had only instanced the statements entitled "The Forger and His Prey" and "The Investigations of an Expert" to show that since Smith's apprehension references had been made in the *Dispatch* to the prisoner, which, even though they did not contain mention of names, their Lordships should prohibit.



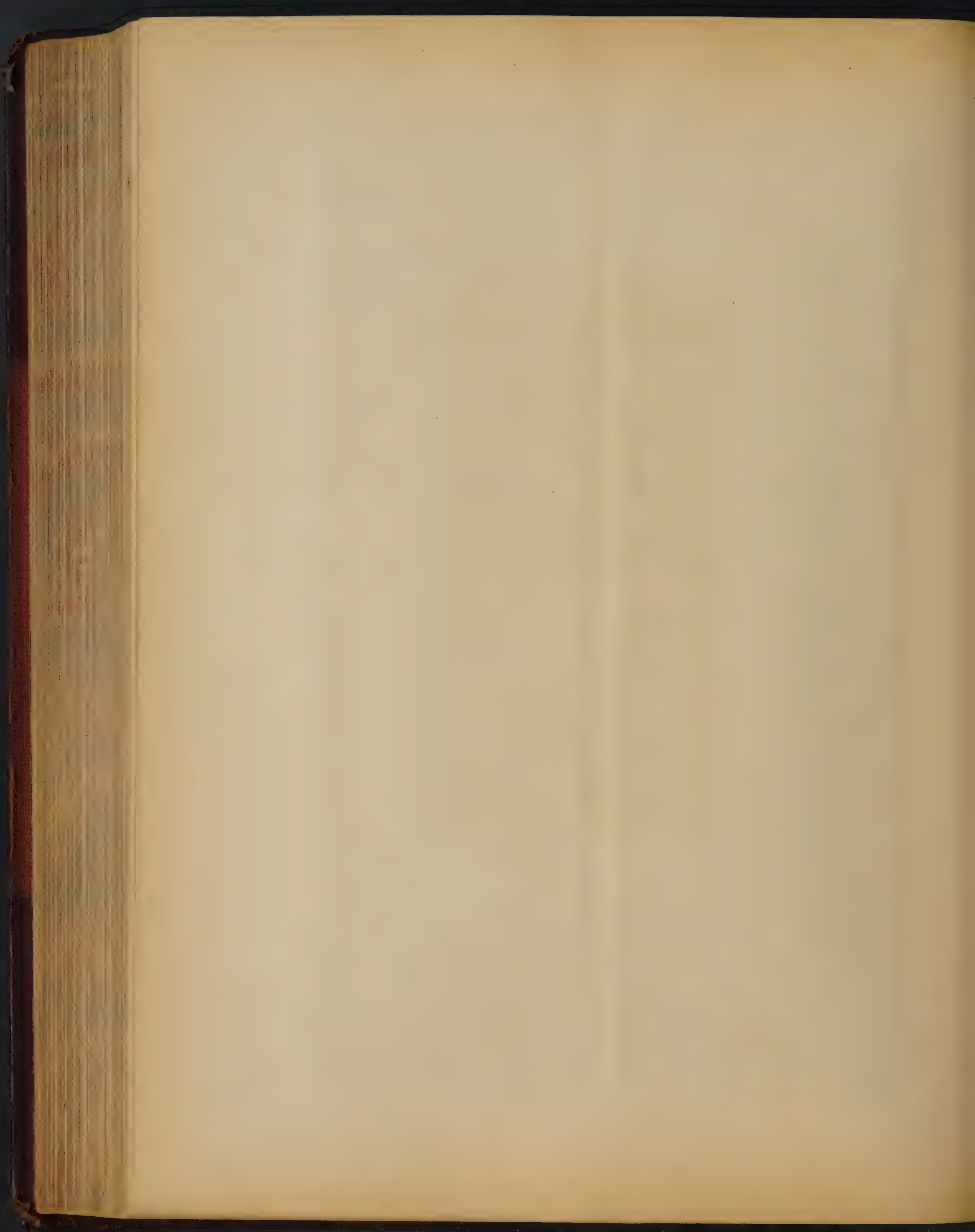


The LORD JUSTICE-CLERK said—My Lords, as regards the competency of this application I have no doubt whatever. I think that whenever any person is placed in the hands of the authorities by a Magistrate with the view to his being tried for an offence, that person is necessarily under the protection of the Court; and being under the protection of the Court, he is entitled to apply to the Court to prevent his having a fair trial, and I think it is not of much importance whether you find a category in which to place that right. I do not think it is a question whether it is contempt of Court to do anything prejudicial to his having a fair trial, or whether it is just a matter that he is quite right to complain of, and to ask the Court's interposition to prevent. It is his right to ask the Court to secure him against anything which may prejudice the public mind so as to prevent him having a fair trial when the time comes for his being placed at the bar. And we should have had no doubt of that even had it been a case where we had no precedents to go upon. But, my Lords, in the case of Enond I think we have a very distinct and clear precedent to go upon. The Court there certainly did not express the slightest doubt as to their jurisdiction to interfere in a similar case to this. Now, my Lords, in these days when everything is scanned, and news published from day to day and comments made from day to day upon almost every event which does or does not happen in the world—(slight laughter)—and when every one of us has an opportunity of reading these bits of news and the comments upon them daily or twice daily, it is quite plain that if anything is published which is prejudicial to the person under accusation, that publication is likely to be more harmful than it might have been in the old days when people were content with newspapers twice a week or even once a week, when the newspapers were smaller and made but small allusion to any particular subject. Now, in this case we know the facts to be and they are not disputed, that there has been a very long discussion in the *Evening Dispatch*, and I should like also to say a very important discussion in the interests of the public, and in the interests of that special portion of the public who have a craving for accumulating old manuscripts and taking an interest in the accumulation; and that discussion undoubtedly had had a very direct bearing upon certain individuals, and particularly upon one individual—the present prisoner—whose case is before us. It is, of course, not only allowable but right that a public newspaper when a great scandal arises in reference to any matter, whether it be a scandal relating to criminal matters or not, may have a duty to point out what has been discovered, to call public attention to it, and to secure that the matter does not drop from public consideration. But, then, when once the matter has been placed in the hands of the public authorities—when once any person is under a charge and committed by the Magistrate to undergo trial in reference to any of these matters which a public newspaper has brought to light, or has assisted in bringing to light, with the view of having it investigated and tried, because, of course, there is no personal view in these matters—whenever that has been done the situation is entirely changed. All that can be effected, or ought to be effected, by the work of a public journal in such a matter is over. The investigation, then, and what is to follow upon it are in entirely different hands, and ought to be, and so far as the Court can secure that must be in the hands of responsible officials—responsible not merely to endeavour to bring the alleged offender to justice, but responsible to do nothing to prejudice his case in any way. Now, my Lords, it is impossible for me to come to any other conclusion than that in this case—where the name of this prisoner had up to the time of his apprehension been very freely discussed in the pages of the *Evening Dispatch*, and he had been pointed at over and over again as being the person who, in the opinion of the writers in the *Dispatch*, was responsible for what they alleged to be very serious forgeries—if a series of comments are to be carried on after his apprehension, and while he is under committal for trial upon the same matter, even though his name be not alluded to directly, it cannot but be prejudicial to his interests in the way of securing a fair trial. The public mind, and through the public mind the mind of those who may have a duty afterwards to consider, calmly and dispassionately, the case against the prisoner, cannot be prejudiced if there is to be a

continuous series of articles, stating very much the same thing as has been stated before the apprehension, with the sole exception that as there has been an apprehension the name of the person which was freely bandied about before, is omitted from the discussion, and only overtly attended to. I cannot help thinking that if it were freely considered by the proprietors and editors of the *Dispatch* themselves, they would see that the best way to secure that which I am sure they desire—a fair trial for this unfortunate prisoner—would be that there should be a lull in the meantime in the comments and remarks and expressions which are used in letters and also in the newspaper on this matter. I have said I have no doubt of the competency of the application; and I have to say further that I think this is a suitable case for such an application; and I think it necessary we must pronounce such an order as will prevent any further comments which may be prejudicial to the prisoner in this case.

LORD TRAYNER—I agree with your Lordship as to the competency of this application. I entertain no doubt whatever that the Court of Justiciary, as a supreme Court and vested with all the powers that are necessary for the protection of itself, its proceedings, or those who are under its protection and care. The prisoner Smith at this moment stands in the latter category, and stands committed for trial, and it is the duty of the Supreme Court to take care that the charge against him shall be fully investigated, and that it shall be investigated in circumstances which will give him all fairness in the investigation, and I think it is an unusual and extreme proposition to maintain that a Court of that character would require to resort to some other Court of co-ordinate jurisdiction to direct it in the exercise of its own functions. Upon the merits of this case I have not the slightest doubt that your Lordship's view is right. The articles in the *Evening Dispatch*, published prior to the apprehension and commitment of the prisoner Smith, were upon a most important topic, and one which well deserved the attention they were able to devote to it. It was a matter of the very last importance to many men in our community, and if the *Evening Dispatch* had information which enabled it not only to fix upon certain documents as spurious that were being tendered to the public as genuine, and it had also information which enabled it to fix upon the person who was guilty of the charge of uttering these, then it was a duty, a public service, and an aid to the Court of Justiciary in its proper function to put these facts before the public, so that the public authorities might take cognisance of them and act upon them. But the moment the prisoner has been apprehended and committed for trial upon a charge brought against him in the first place by the newspaper we are dealing with, the moment that has been done, then, as your Lordship has justly observed, the duty and function of the journal is at an end. From that time forward the investigation of the crime and the punishment of the crime belongs to the Court of Justiciary alone. Now, my Lords, in these circumstances I think it is not open to question that to permit such articles or similar articles as have been published for sometime in the *Evening Dispatch* would undoubtedly be prejudicial to the fair trial of the prisoner, and as it is our first function to take care that every prisoner has a perfectly fair trial, and that he shall not be prejudiced in his defence in any way by anything that happens after his commitment, I am clearly, if it be necessary, we must restrain the *Evening Dispatch* from continuing the articles relative to these manuscripts which are said to be forgeries, and Smith's connection with them, until after the trial, and either the guilt or innocence of Smith has been established.

LORD KINCAIRNEY said—I am of the same opinion. I have heard nothing to lead me to doubt the power of the Court to interfere in this case. It has hardly been argued from the bar that if these articles had been directed against Smith by name there could be any objection to this note. The argument has been that the Court should not interfere because Smith's name has not been mentioned. I think that is a vain argument. I think it is impossible to doubt that if these articles were directed against Smith, and it is still less possible to





doubt that the public understood them in that way. I think with a continuation of such articles, it would be utterly impossible for this man to get a fair and impartial trial. On that ground I agree with your Lordship's judgment.

The LORD JUSTICE-CLERK—Both Lord Trayner and myself have said that if necessary we will pronounce a judgment, but I should suppose after the opinion of the Court that that will be quite unnecessary, and I hope it will be.

Mr COOPER—Of course, as I said in my address to your Lordships, we in no way desire to prejudice the man Smith in his trial, but the discussion of the subject of forged MSS. is before the public.

The LORD JUSTICE-CLERK—I wish to make a suggestion to you and those behind you, that one dish, well cooked, though ne'er so full, is oft sufficient. Some of us are readers of the *Dispatch*, and we would like to see something fresh occasionally.

Mr COOPER—We desire to publish articles upon, forged MSS. in general only. We do not wish to commit any contempt of Court and we submit we have the right—

Lord TRAYNER (interposing)—We are not asking any argument. We ask you simply this, whether after the expression of the Court you would undertake on behalf of the editor and proprietors of the *Dispatch* to say that they will abstain from writing about these forgeries and Smith in the future? If you are not prepared to give that undertaking we will dispose of the case.

Mr COOPER—I shall certainly undertake that we will not write about Smith.

Lord TRAYNER—That will not do; we had better write an interlocutor.

The LORD JUSTICE-CLERK indicated that the order would be pronounced.

Mr DEWAR asked for expenses, but these were refused.

#### THE ORDER.

The order of the Court is in the following terms:—  
“The Lord Justice-Clerk and the Lords Commissioners of Justiciary having resumed consideration of the petition and heard counsel for the parties, prohibit the editor, publishers, and proprietors of the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* newspaper from publishing or circulating statements relative to manuscripts or signatures alleged to have been forged by the petitioner, Alexander Howland Smith, or doing anything whereby such statements may be published, until the proceedings against the said Alexander Howland Smith are brought to a conclusion.”



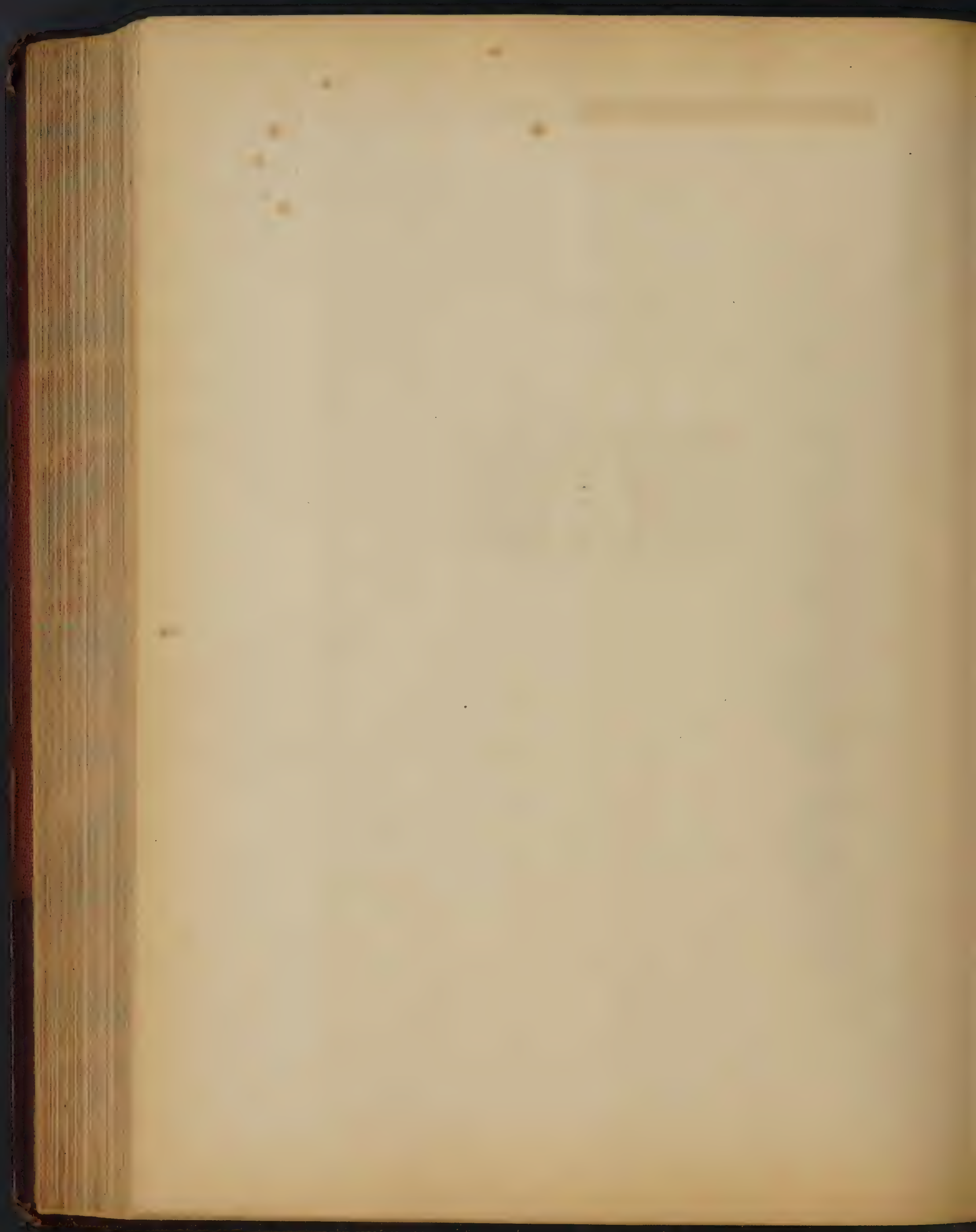


Though there are known to be several well-authenticated autograph copies of Burns's "Scots wha hae" in existence, it would appear that the original manuscript of the famous song is in the possession of Mrs. J. G. Burns, Chapelizod, county Dublin. This copy was presented by Burns, after he had given it his finishing touches, to the wife of his brother Gilbert in 1793, two years after her marriage, and is now owned by the widow of Gilbert Burns's son. Mrs. Burns has repeatedly declined to grant the MS. of the song and other interesting relics of the poet in her possession on loan to national and other exhibitions, but is glad at all times to have an opportunity of showing them to interested individuals.

#### AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF ROBERT BURNS.

At a meeting of the Birmingham Scottish Society on Thursday at the Grand Hotel, Birmingham, Mr. Lawson Tait, who presided, exhibited a hitherto unpublished letter of Robert Burns. The appearance of the paper and the watermark placed its authenticity beyond dispute. Moreover, the envelope bore the date "January, 1784," and was addressed to Burns's great friend Robert Nicol, of the High School Edinburgh. The letter had been in the hands of only four persons. It passed from Nicol to the father of the lady who had given it to him (Mr. Tait). It bore the Mauchline postmark and the postal stamp giving the date of the delivery of the letter (January 21, 1784), so that all those points taken together made its authenticity indisputable. The manuscript was very dilapidated, and it was only with difficulty that he had deciphered the characters. The letter itself was undated—which was a characteristic of the writer, but the date was very clearly fixed by the postmark and the contents of the communication. The opening sentences were missing, the fragment beginning thus:—

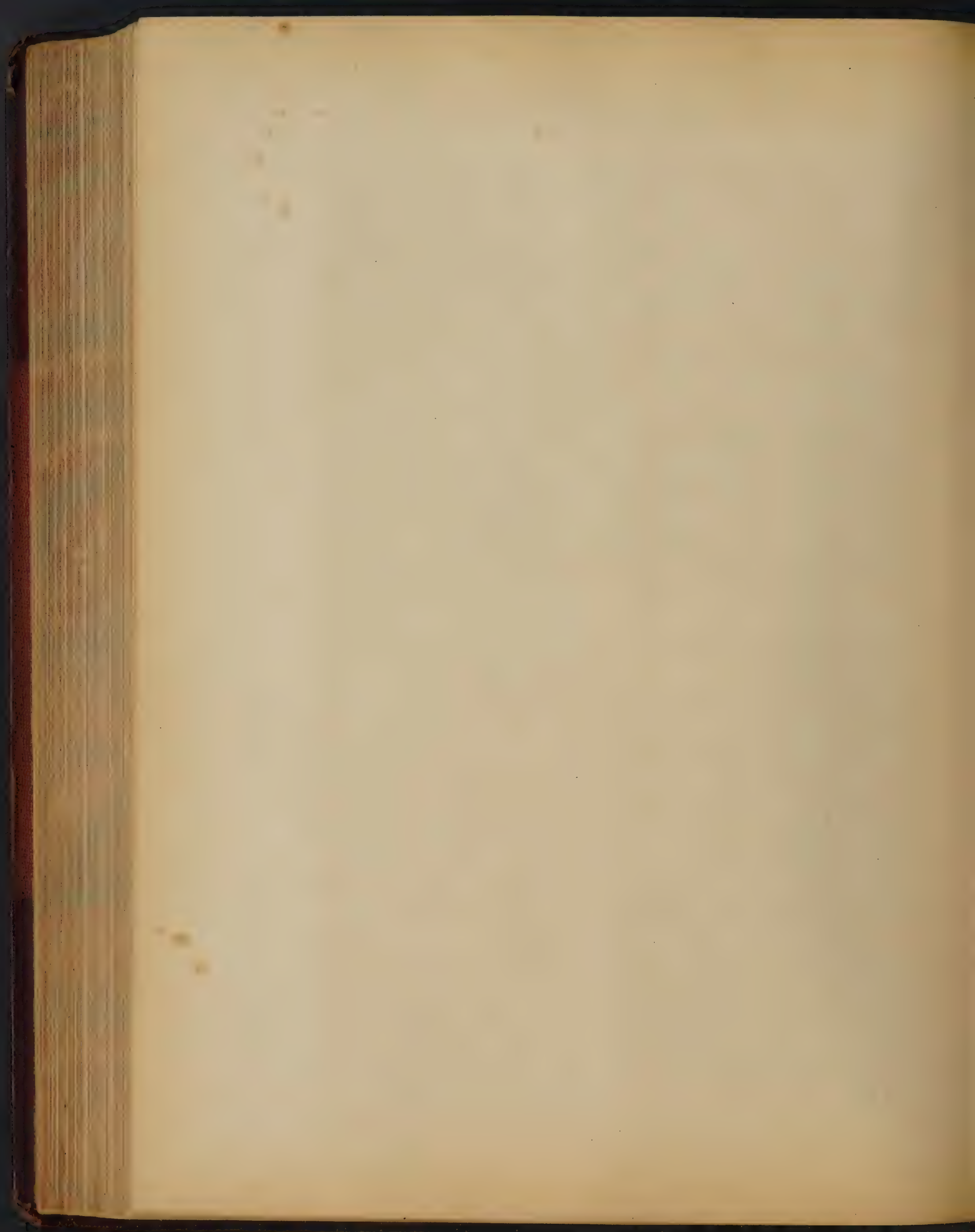
I don't know how my farm may turn out, but I shall fairly put it to trial. If it should not do, I won't struggle with a ruinous bargain, but betake myself to my excise business, as I have got my instructions, past trial, &c., and have no more to do than ask employment for the Board. . . . My principal design at present is to inform you that I have left with the carrier from Mauchline to Edinburgh a small cheese of last year's produce, which I hope will do no dishonour to Ayrshire. You will please accept of it as a small acknowledgment for those obligations which the world, so far from imitating, would scarcely believe were I to tell them. I propose it as an annual tribute which, my dearest sir, you must allow me to tax myself with while I am a farmer. My best compliments to Mrs. Nicol, little Ned, and all the family. Would to God, sir, that instead of this lame, dull epistle I could send you a transcript of my glowing heart when I think of you. Louis Cauvin is a noble exception to the doctrine of original sin; remember me to him. Mr. Vair, too, please give him my compliments. Mr. Nicol, can time ever extinguish the glowing remembrance of you in my bosom. The idea of your uncommon abilities may dissipate a little in comparison; but where, except surrounding the fountain of goodness, shall I find a heart to equal yours? Adieu!—ROBERT BURNS.





THE EVENING DISPATCH, DECEMBER 19, 1892.

THE Justiciary Appeal Court on Saturday, after hearing counsel, pronounced an order in the petition of A. H. Smith, prohibiting the editor, publishers, and proprietors of the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* from publishing or circulating statements relative to manuscripts or signatures alleged to have been forged by the petitioner, or doing anything whereby such statements may be published, until the proceedings against him are brought to a conclusion.





## JUSTICIARY APPEAL COURT—

SATURDAY, December 17.

(Before the Lord Justice-Clerk, and Lords Trayner and Kincairney.)

## PETITION TO RESTRAIN THE "EDINBURGH EVENING DISPATCH."

PETITION—A. H. SMITH.

The note on behalf of A. H. Smith, at present in custody on a charge relating to the MSS. forgeries, which have been exposed in the *Evening Dispatch*, craving the Court to restrain the *Dispatch* from publishing further articles on the subject until his trial, came up again to-day, when, in terms of the order of the Court yesterday, the proprietors and editor of the *Dispatch* were represented at the bar by counsel.

Mr COOPER, for the respondents, submitted that this application by the petitioner should not be granted for two reasons—first, because in the form it was presented it was quite incompetent; and second, that even if it were competent it was too vague for the Court to pronounce upon. Of course he did not for a moment dispute their Lordships' right to deal with matters of contempt of Court, but he must emphatically dispute their right to interfere with the publication of anything that a newspaper chose to publish so long as it did not amount to contempt. In this case he admitted that it would be contempt of Court if the *Evening Dispatch* took to criticising the evidence against the panel Smith, and to insinuating indirectly that Smith was the utterer of the forged documents, pretending that they were real; but the fact was since Mr Smith, the petitioner, was arrested, on the 5th December, the *Evening Dispatch* had been very careful to omit his name from all discussion of those manuscript frauds. On one occasion only since that date had the *Dispatch* mentioned his name, and that was *per incuriam*. On the 7th December, in the paragraph referred to by Mr Smith in the complaint, the *Dispatch* undoubtedly referred to "Antique Smith's" handwriting in connection with the manuscripts which they then had before them. But he could give an explanation with regard to that single inadvertent reference. The article was headed "300 Original MSS.," and then proceeded—

When the London experts challenged Mr Stillie's Burns MSS., he issued a counterblast containing an innuendo against "English Papers and Catalogues." According to this document Mr Stillie had passed through his hands "upwards of 300 original MSS. of Burns." A list of the titles and purchasers' names would be interesting, but as this is a large order, we shall meantime be content if he will produce the document from which he took this *fac-simile* of Burns's signature. Notwithstanding the cocksureness of Mr Stillie, we have come to the conclusion that the *fac-simile* in the counterblast, which we give below, represents the doubling weakness of "Antique" Smith, and not the strength and certainty of the Poet's quill.

The reference to "Antique" Smith was inserted there *per incuriam*. This paragraph was received by the editor of the *Dispatch* several days before Mr Smith was arrested, and he delayed inserting the paragraph because he had to get his artist to reproduce the signature of Robert Burns, which was reproduced in the newspaper. He got that reproduced and put in this paragraph, and by mistake he admitted into print the single reference to Smith's "antique" hand. With that single exception the discussion in the *Evening Dispatch* since the time that Smith was arrested had been purely upon the question of these manuscript frauds in general. He submitted that it would be beyond their Lordships' power and province to suppress the publication of the discussion upon a subject like this, because Smith had been arrested. Let them take the case of a man arrested for murder. It had never been suggested that newspapers were, after the arrest of the man, to be prevented from giving reports of the discoveries from day to day with regard to the murderer's career. Let them take the case of the Rainhill murders. It was never suggested for a moment that it was contempt of Court to publish, after Deeming was in prison on a charge of murder, the discovery of bodies in places visited by Deeming. This matter of the manuscript frauds was a most important one for Edinburgh, and for, practically, the literary world. He might mention that since Mr Smith was arrested a distinguished collector in America was on the point of paying £100 for manuscripts in this country of Burns, Scott, and other persons. The agents of the gentleman in this country, who were to purchase those manuscripts, in consequence of what was being said in the *Dispatch*, submitted the

manuscripts to the British Museum authorities, and after they had been examined they were found to be spurious. Those facts were published in the *Evening Dispatch*. There were innumerable cases of that sort. In one publication the *Dispatch* gave a list of unhistorical MSS. Were their Lordships to prevent the *Evening Dispatch* from publishing documents of that description? Were their Lordships to prevent the *Evening Dispatch* from discussing the question of literary frauds? He had there a manuscript which had been sent in that day, in which it was proposed to discuss literary frauds which took place in the middle of last century. Were their Lordships to prevent the publication of that? He demurred to the application in the terms in which it was asked. They were asked to prohibit the respondents from publishing or circulating any statement relative to the alleged forgeries. The *Evening Dispatch* had never suggested that all these forgeries now existing in this country and elsewhere were the handiwork of the prisoner Smith. Since the time Smith was arrested no reference had been made to him except in the single instance he had told them of. Their Lordships had been further asked to prohibit the editor of the *Dispatch* from publishing anything prejudicial to the prisoner, A. H. Smith, until the proceedings connected with his trial had been brought to a conclusion. But how was the editor to know what their Lordships' order would cover? Of course the editor did not intend, and never had intended, to incur their Lordships' penalties by committing contempt of Court, and in what had been published in the *Dispatch* since Smith's arrest he had been very careful that no such thing should be committed. But the present application to the Court was a perfectly general application, and the editor would never be for a moment safe if he put the word MSS. into the paper. Supposing the application were granted, and manuscripts of Juvenal or Virgil were brought to light, the editor would not be able to report them. Now, he understood that the only case which Mr Dewar had been able, with all his diligence, to discover in his favour was the case of Emond, as far back as 1829. The report of the case was extremely short, but there was sufficient reported to show that the case was entirely different from the petition in question. In the Emond case a man was in custody on a charge of murder, and in the application which had been made on his behalf, it was complained that since his committal various statements had been published relative to his case. But in the case of the *Dispatch* there was no statement published relative to the case of Smith after his apprehension. In the Emond case the complaint was that statements had been published after his committal as to the evidence to be adduced against him, and as to the supposed motives by which he was thought to be actuated. But that case was entirely different from the case in hand, because in it the publication complained of related directly to matters in the case. He submitted that a distinction existed between matters which did refer to a case before the Court, and matters which had a general public bearing, and which in no way referred to the prisoner Smith. Further, he submitted that the case was utterly incompetent, and that their Lordships ought to refuse the application. Of course he was willing to put in an undertaking that the *Evening Dispatch* would not publish anything prejudicial to Smith. It had not done so in the past, and it did not intend to do so.

The LORD JUSTICE-CLERK—What is your objection to the competency?

Mr COOPER said he objected to their Lordships in Justiciary considering anything beyond contempt of Court in a case of that kind. If Mr Smith had any objection to the publication of the matters complained of, apart from any objection that could be taken on the ground of contempt of Court, he maintained that the recourse was in the Bill Chamber.

The LORD JUSTICE-CLERK—But the case of Emond appears to be on all fours with this case we are considering as regards the question of competency. In Emond's case it was an application to the Court to prevent the publication of statements prejudicial to the prisoner before his trial.

Mr COOPER said the distinction he drew was this—that in the case of Emond the publication complained of directly bore upon the prisoner's case, whereas in the case of the *Dispatch* the publication did not.







The LORD JUSTICE-CLERK—But the competency of these proceedings does not depend on the sufficiency of the statements complained of. Assuming that statements have been made in the *Dispatch* which would, in the language of the judgment in *Emond's* case, be relative to the alleged charge against Smith and prejudicial to the prisoner, would it not then be competent for the Court to deal with an application of this kind?

Mr COOPER—I think that a great deal might be said for the competency of an application in the event, which your Lordship assumes.

The LORD JUSTICE-CLERK—Then the real objection is not to the competency of the note, but that no relative facts have been stated to entitle us as a Court to act as the Court acted in the case of *Emond*.

Mr COOPER said he wished their Lordships to understand the distinction he drew. He admitted their Lordships' competency to deal with any matters which inferred contempt of Court, but he objected to their Lordships' competency in Justiciary to consider what was practically an application for interdict against the publication of what might be libellous documents. He maintained that Mr Smith, if he thought he had been aggrieved by these publications, must go to the Bill Chamber and must get interdict there against the *Dispatch* if he could show that matter was being published prejudicial to his case as a prisoner awaiting trial.

Mr DEWAR, for the petitioner, said he contended that their Lordships had jurisdiction in the matter. From the moment that a prisoner was apprehended, the protection of his person was under the control of the criminal authorities, and the protection of his rights as a prisoner was under the protection of that Court. One of the rights of a prisoner was that he should have a fair trial, and if he could in that case show that the rights of the prisoner in question had been tampered with, then he submitted that their Lordships had jurisdiction to stop it in that Court as a competent Court. Counsel for the respondents had told him that the name of the prisoner had only been once mentioned in the *Dispatch* after his apprehension. He admitted that, but he desired to state that after that mention had been made of the prisoner's name in the *Dispatch* they had written to the *Dispatch* asking them to stop further publication. The publishers and editor of the *Dispatch* did not answer that note; they had not then given the prisoner's counsel the explanation which was offered now—that it was by mistake that the prisoner's name had crept into the paper. After that time, it was true, the *Dispatch* had never mentioned the prisoner's name, but they had by implication very obviously damaged the prisoner's defence. He referred their Lordships chiefly to an article which appeared in the *Dispatch* on the 9th December—that was four days after the prisoner was apprehended. His name, it was true, was not mentioned, but this heading had been given to the statement, "The Forger and His Prey." Yesterday he had pointed out that the *Dispatch* had so closely connected the man Smith with the forgeries that it was impossible to doubt to whom that statement referred. In that statement it was said, "For the sake of his petty gains the forger has succeeded in harassing professional and business men all over the world." The writer then went on to give instances of eight classes of people who had been injured by the forgeries.

Lord TRAYNER—That seems to be a letter addressed to the editor of the *Dispatch*.

Mr DEWAR—Yes, my Lord, but it is incorporated in an article dealing with the whole subject. Continuing, Mr Dewar said the statement in question went on to tell the different people who had been injured by the forgeries. Now, he assumed that the trial of Smith was to be a jury trial, because the charge was adjudged so serious that bail had been refused, and the jury, whoever they might be, were already in possession of this fact, that the different classes of men referred to had been seriously injured by the forgeries. Further, no later than the previous (Friday) night, and after the proceedings in that Court had taken place, matter had been published in the *Dispatch* relating to the MSS. forgeries.

The LORD JUSTICE-CLERK—But was it not published earlier in the day, before the case came before us?

Mr DEWAR—Yes; no doubt it was published in the earlier editions, but it was also published in the

four o'clock edition, after the case had been dealt with in this Court. Proceeding, counsel said the matter published in the previous day's *Dispatch* contained what was headed "The Investigations of a Chemical Expert," and in it was given what purported to be a deliverance of this expert on a number of documents which had been sent to him for investigation. This expert came, according to the statement, to the conclusion that the documents in question were all forged, and a list of these documents was appended. Now, he contended it was not material whether the prisoner was to be charged with forging these very documents or not; for if, on the one hand, he was to be tried for forging them, it was clearly quite improper for the *Dispatch* to refer to them as it had; and, on the other hand, if he was not, it was just as improper that the *Dispatch*, in dealing with the subject, should mention other forged documents about which it was telling the jury that if the prisoner had not forged them there were other documents which the prisoner was supposed to have forged. Besides that, there was another matter to which he wished to refer, although in this case the publication of it had no doubt been on a day before the apprehension of the prisoner. On the 4th December the *Dispatch* unearthed from the records of the Court the circumstance that the prisoner had previously been charged with embezzlement, but had been acquitted of the charge. On the day in question the *Dispatch* had set forth the whole story of that matter. Now, he thought that was a most improper proceeding on the part of the *Dispatch*, because, although Smith had been acquitted of the charge, the jury, if it had read the *Dispatch*'s story, could not blot from their minds the fact that Smith had formerly been charged with embezzlement. The jury, as a matter of fact, was not entitled to know that the man had been in trouble before, even although he had been acquitted.

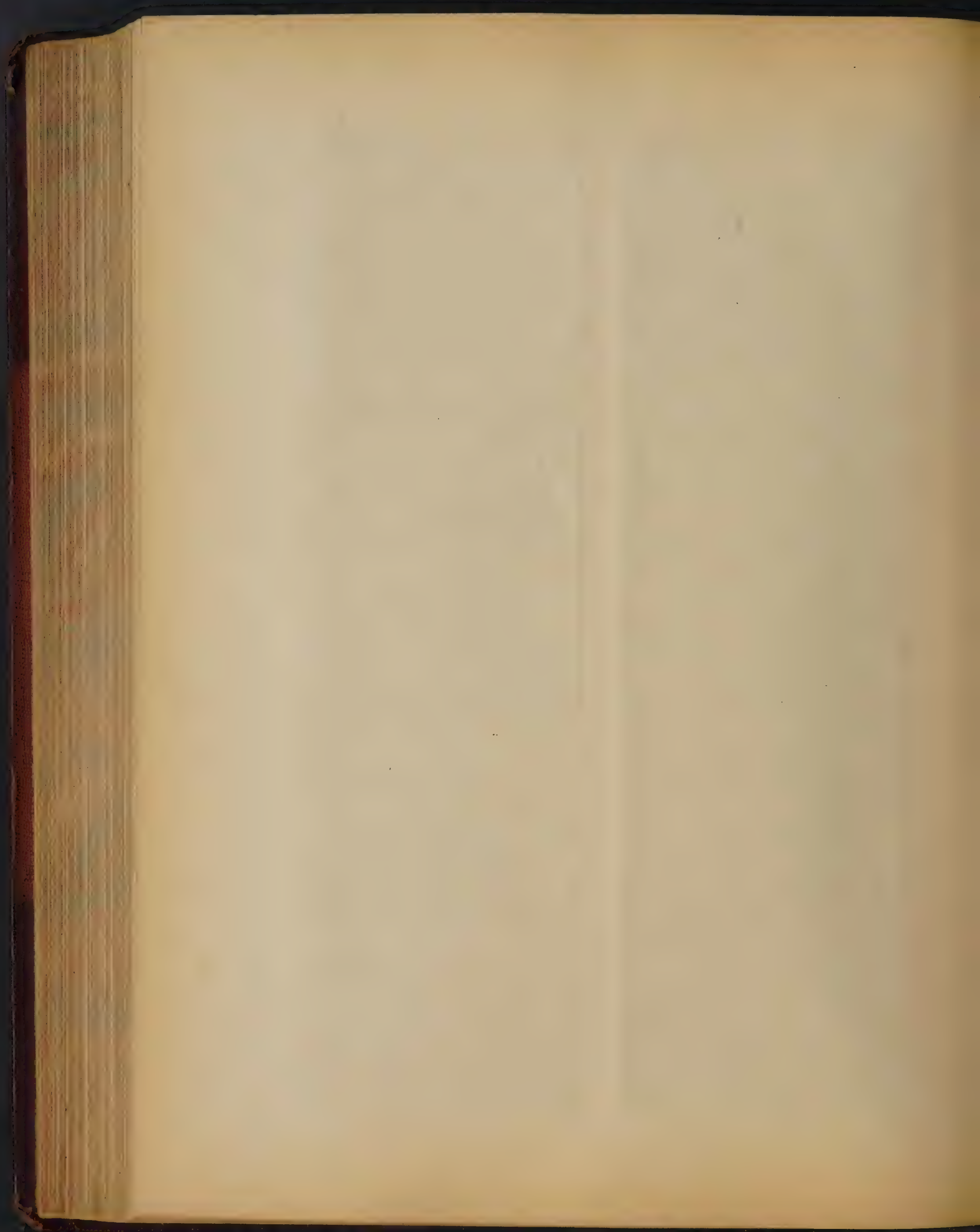
Lord TRAYNER—But these things were published before Smith's apprehension. The most of that which you were complaining of yesterday had been published before his apprehension. It had therefore no bearing on the present petition, because the public press is quite entitled, if it charges a man with forgery, for the protection and in the interests of the public, to state what his character was.

Mr DEWAR said he had only instanced the statements entitled "The Forger and His Prey" and "The Investigations of an Expert" to show that since Smith's apprehension references had been made in the *Dispatch* to the prisoner, which, even though they did not contain mention of names, their Lordships should prohibit.

After consultation the Court gave judgment.

The LORD JUSTICE-CLERK said—My Lords, as regards the competency of this application I have no doubt whatever. I think that whenever any person is placed in the hands of the authorities by a Magistrate with the view to his being tried for an offence, that person is necessarily under the protection of the Court; and being under the protection of the Court, he is entitled to apply to the Court to prevent anything being done which shall in any way prejudice his having a fair trial, and I think it is not of much importance whether or not you find a category in which to place that right. I do not think it is a question whether it is contempt of Court to do anything prejudicial to his having a fair trial, or whether it is just a matter that he is got right to complain of, and to ask the Court's interposition to prevent. It is his right to ask the Court to secure him against anything which may prejudice the public mind so as to prevent him having a fair trial when the time comes for his being placed at the bar. And I should have had no doubt of that even had it been a case where we had no precedent to go upon. But, my Lords, in the case of *Emond* I think we have a very distinct and clear precedent to go upon. The Court there certainly did not express the slightest doubt as to their jurisdiction to interfere in a similar case to this. Now, my Lords, in these days when everything is scanned, and news published from day to day and comments made from day to day upon almost every event which does or does not happen in the world—(slight laughter)—and when every one of us has an opportunity of reading these bits of news and the comments upon them daily, or twice daily, it is quite plain that if anything is published which is prejudicial to the person under accusation, that publication is likely to be more







harmful than it might have been in the old days when people were content with newspapers twice a week or even once a week—when the newspapers were smaller and made but small allusion to any particular subject. Now, in this case we know the facts to be—and they are not disputed—that there has been a very long discussion in the *Evening Dispatch*, and I should like also to say a very important discussion in the interests of the public, and in the interests of that special portion of the public who have a craving for accumulating old manuscripts and take an interest in their accumulation; and that discussion undoubtedly has had a very direct bearing upon certain individuals, and particularly upon one individual—the present prisoner—whose case is before us. It is, of course, not only allowable but right that a public newspaper when a great scandal arises in reference to any matter, whether it be a scandal relating to criminal matters or not, may have a duty to point out what has been discovered, to call public attention to it, and to secure that the matter does not drop from public consideration. But, then, when once the matter has been placed in the hands of the public authorities—when once any person is under a charge and committed by the Magistrate to undergo trial in reference to any of these matters which a public newspaper has brought to light, or has assisted in bringing to light, with the view of having it investigated and tried, because, of course, there is no personal view in these matters—whenever that has been done the situation is entirely changed. All that can be effected, or ought to be effected, by the work of a public journal in such a matter is over. The investigation, then, and what is to follow upon it, are in entirely different hands, and ought to be, and, so far as the Court can secure that, they must be in the hands of responsible officials—responsible not merely to endeavour to bring the alleged offender to justice, but responsible to do nothing to prejudice his case in any way. Now, my Lords, it is impossible for me to come to any other conclusion than that in this case—where the name of this prisoner had up to the time of his apprehension been very freely discussed in the pages of the *Evening Dispatch*, and he had been pointed at over and over again as being the person who, in the opinion of the writers in the *Dispatch*, was responsible for what they alleged to be very serious forgeries—if a series of comments are to be carried on after his apprehension, and while he is under commitment for trial upon the same matter, even though his name be not alluded to directly, it cannot but be prejudicial to his interests in the way of securing a fair trial. The public mind, and through the public mind, the mind of those who may have a duty afterwards to consider, calmly and dispassionately, the case against the prisoner, cannot but be prejudiced if there is to be a continued series of articles, stating very much the same thing as has been stated before the apprehension, with the sole exception that as there has been an apprehension the name of the person which was freely bandied about before is omitted from the discussion and only overtly alluded to. I cannot help thinking that if it were fairly considered by the proprietors and editor of the *Dispatch* themselves, they would see that the best way to secure that which I am sure they desire—a fair trial for this unfortunate prisoner—would be that there should be a lull in the meantime in the comments and remarks and also in the expressions which are used in letters in the newspaper on this matter. I have said I have no doubt of the competency of the application; and I have to say further that I think this is a suitable case for such an application; and I think, if necessary, we must pronounce such an order as will prevent any further comments which may be prejudicial to the prisoner in this case.

Lord TRAYNER said—I agree with your Lordship. As to the competency of this application I entertain no doubt whatever. The Court of Justiciary is a supreme Court and vested with all the powers that are necessary for the protection of itself, its proceedings, or those who are under its protection and care. The prisoner Smith at this moment stands in the latter category, and stands committed for trial, and it is the duty of the Supreme Court to take care that the charge against him shall be fully investigated, and that it shall be investigated in circumstances which will give him all fairness in the investigation; and I think it is an unusual and extreme proposition to maintain that a Court of that character would require to resort to some other Court of co-ordinate jurisdiction to direct it in the exercise

of its own functions. Upon the merits of this case, I have not the slightest doubt that your Lordship's view is right. The articles in the *Evening Dispatch*, published prior to the apprehension and commitment of the prisoner Smith, were upon a most important topic, and one which well deserved the attention they were able to devote to it. It was a matter of the very last importance to many men in our community, and if the *Evening Dispatch* had information which enabled it not only to fix upon certain documents as spurious that were being tendered to the public as genuine, and had also information which enabled it to fix upon the person who was guilty of forging and uttering these, then it was a duty, a public service, and an aid to the Court of Justiciary, and its proper function to put these facts before the public, so that the public authorities might take cognisance of them and act upon them. But the moment the prisoner has been apprehended and committed for trial upon a charge brought against him in the first place by the newspaper we are dealing with—the moment that has been done, then, as your Lordship has justly observed, the duty and function of the journal is at an end. From that time forward the investigation of the crime and the punishment of the crime belongs to the Court of Justiciary alone. Now, my Lords, in these circumstances I think it is not open to question that to permit such articles or similar articles as have been published for some time in the *Evening Dispatch* would undoubtedly be prejudicial to the fair trial of the prisoner, and as it is our first function to take care that every prisoner has a perfectly fair trial, and that he shall not be prejudiced in his defence in any way by anything that happens after his commitment, I am clearly of opinion that, if it be necessary, we must restrain the *Evening Dispatch* from continuing the articles relative to these manuscripts which are said to be forgeries and Smith's connection with them until after the trial, and either the guilt or innocence of Smith has been established.

Lord KINCARDINE said—I am of the same opinion. I have heard nothing to lead me to doubt the power of the Court to interfere in this case. It has hardly been argued from the bar that if these articles had been directed against Smith by name there could be any objection to this note. The argument has been that the Court should not interfere because Smith's name has not been mentioned. I think that is a vain argument. I think it is impossible to doubt that these articles were directed against Smith as much as though Smith's name were mentioned, and it is still more impossible to doubt that the public understood them in that way. I think with a continuation of such articles, it would be utterly impossible for this man to get a fair and impartial trial. On that ground I agree with your Lordships.

The LORD JUSTICE-CLERK—Both Lord Trayner and myself have said that if necessary we will pronounce a judgment, but I should suppose after the opinion of the Court that that will be quite unnecessary, and I hope it will be.

Mr COOPER—Of course, as I said in my address to your Lordships, we in no way desire to prejudice the man Smith in his trial, but the discussion of the subject of forged MSS. is before the public.

The LORD JUSTICE-CLERK—I wish to make a suggestion to you and those behind you, that “one dish, well cooked, though never so full, is oft sufficient.” Some of us are readers of the *Dispatch*, and we would like to see something fresh occasionally.

Mr COOPER—We desire to publish articles upon forged MSS. in general only. We do not wish to commit any contempt of Court, and we submit we have a right—

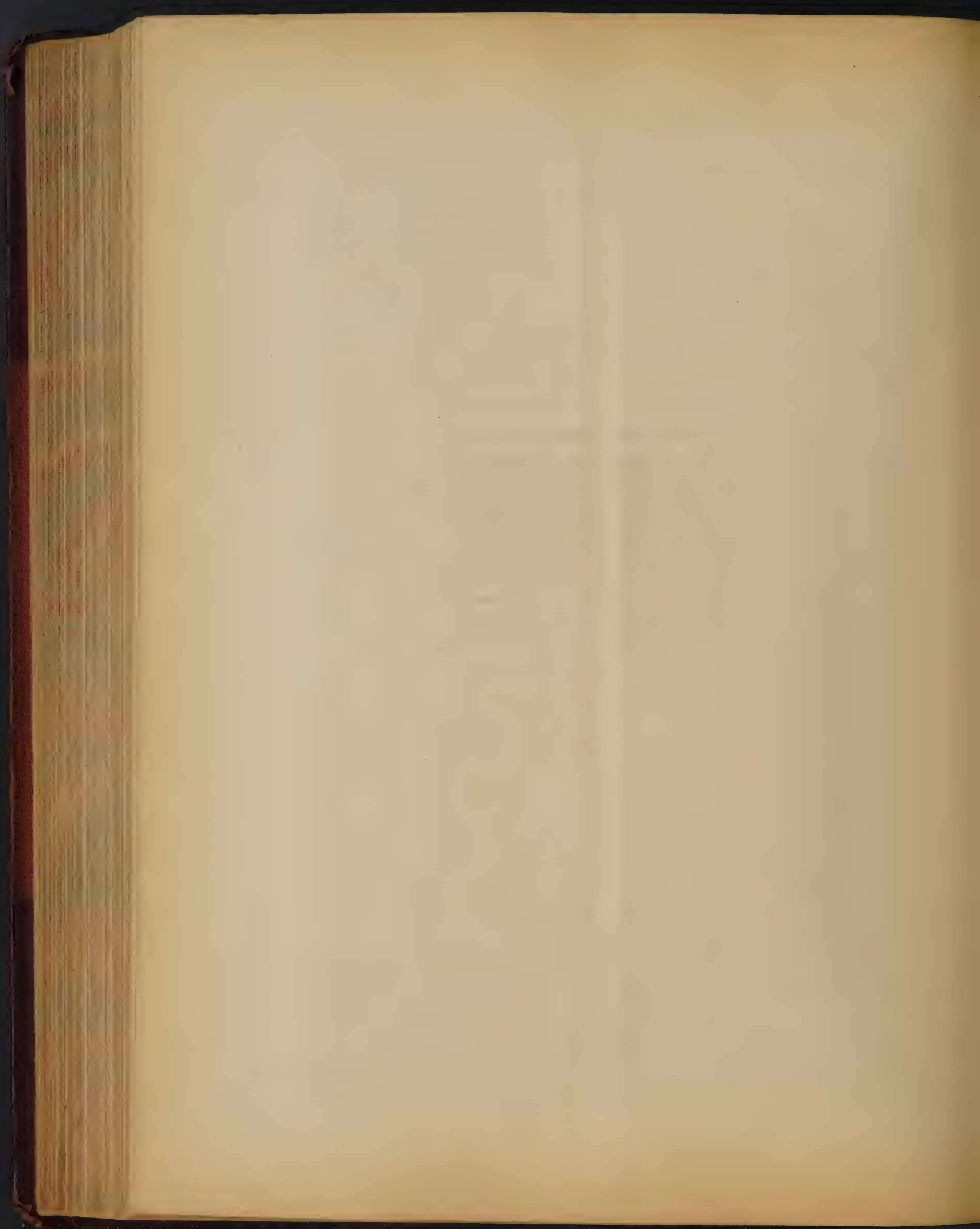
Lord TRAYNER (interposing)—We are not asking any argument. We ask you simply this, whether after the expression of opinion by the Court you would undertake on behalf of the editor and proprietors of the *Dispatch* to say that they will abstain from writing about these forgeries and Smith in the future? If you are not prepared to give that undertaking we will dispose of the case.

Mr COOPER—I shall certainly undertake that we will not write about Smith.

Lord TRAYNER—That will not do; we had better write an interlocutor.

The LORD JUSTICE-CLERK indicated that an order would be pronounced.





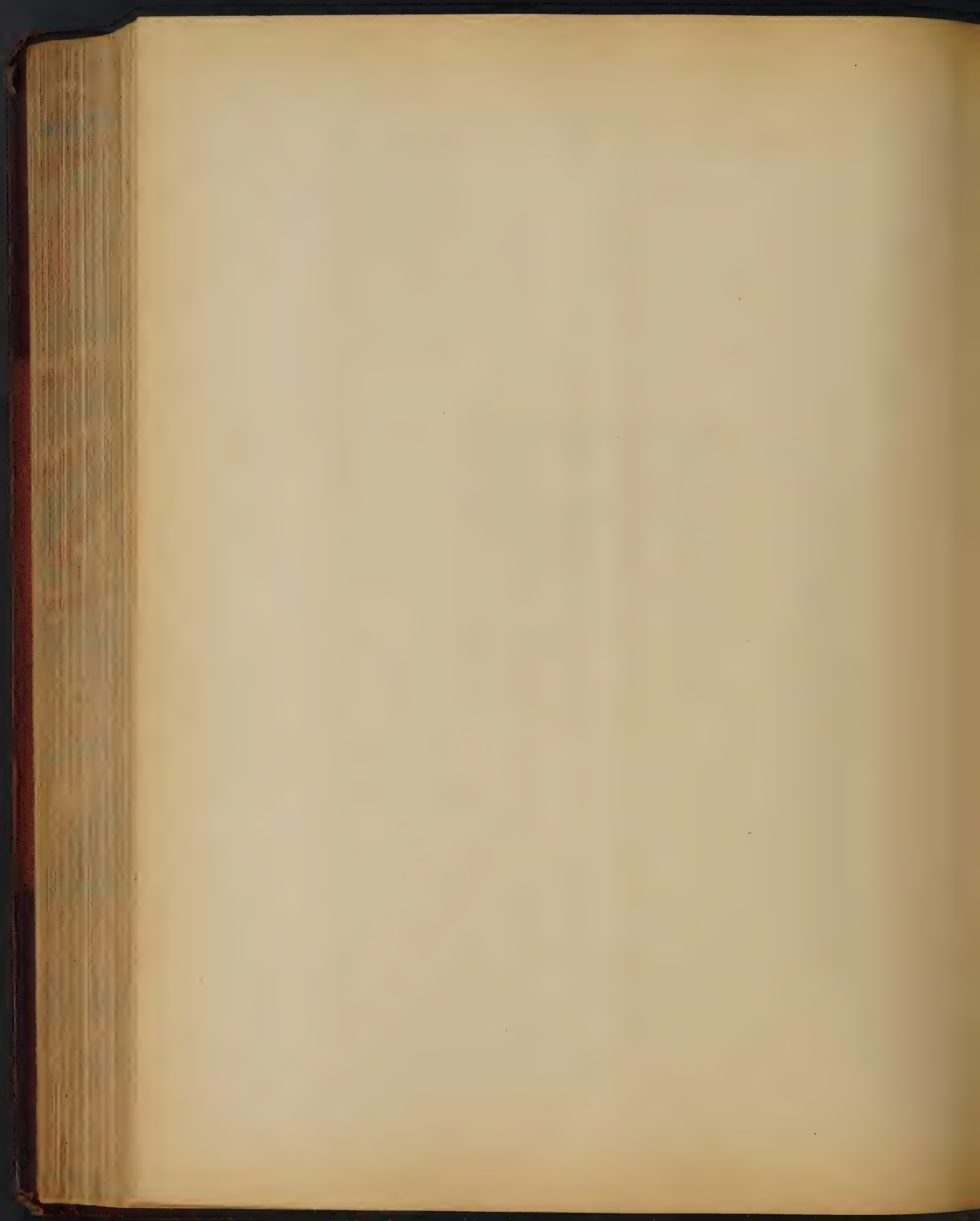


Mr DEWAR asked for expenses, but these were refused.

The order of the Court is in the following terms :—  
“The Lord Justice-Clerk and the Lords Commissioners of Justiciary having resumed consideration of the petition and heard counsel for the parties, prohibit the editor, publishers, and proprietors of the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* newspaper from publishing or circulating statements relative to manuscripts or signatures alleged to have been forged by the petitioner, Alexander Howland Smith, or doing anything whereby such statements may be published, until the proceedings against the said Alexander Howland Smith are brought to a conclusion.”

Counsel for the Petitioner—Mr Dewar. Agent—Daniel Turner, L.A.

Counsel for the Respondents—Mr F. T. Cooper.  
Agents—Henderson & Clark, W.S.



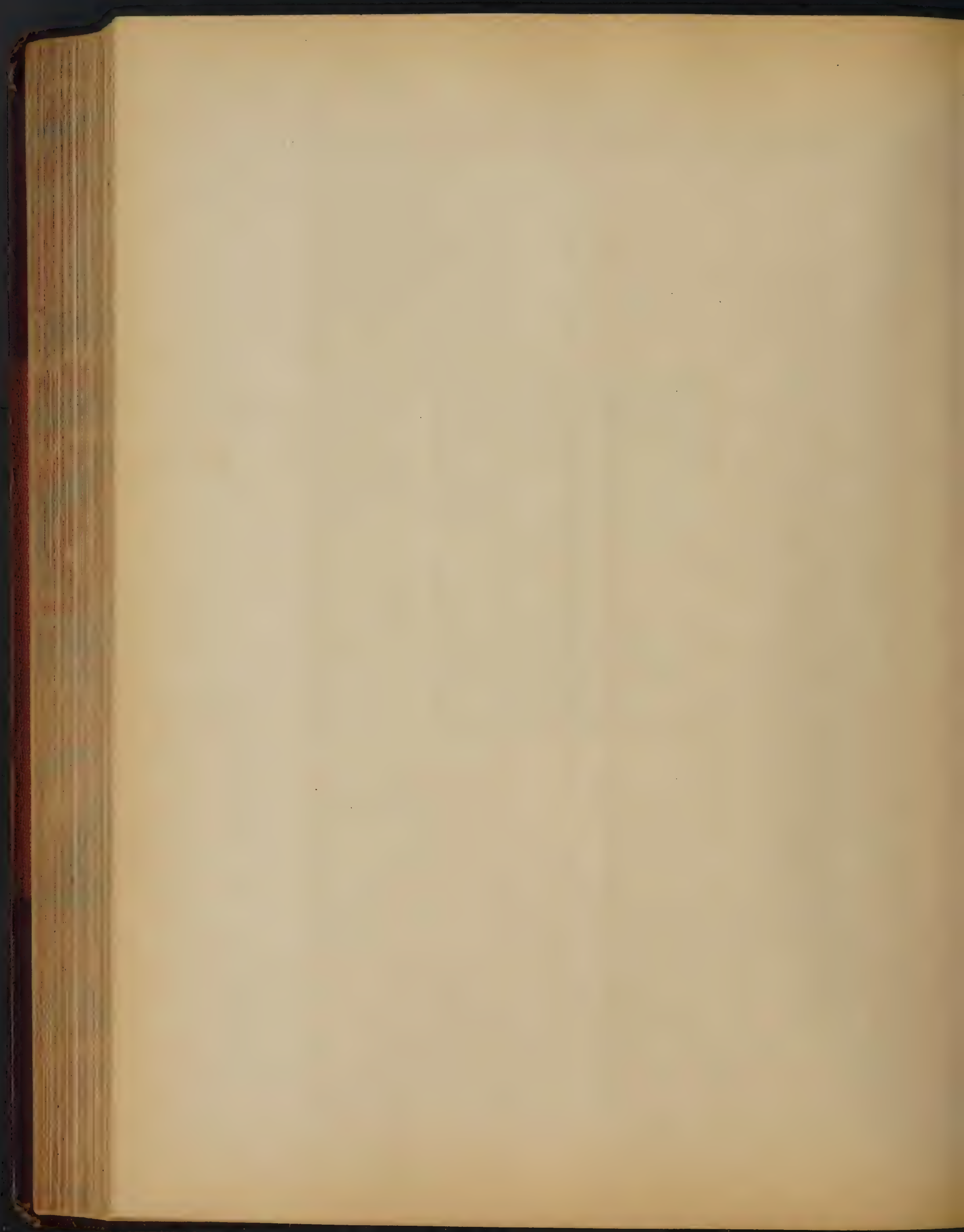


"A NEW POEM BY BURNS."

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EVENING DISPATCH."]

Glasgow, December 20, 1892.

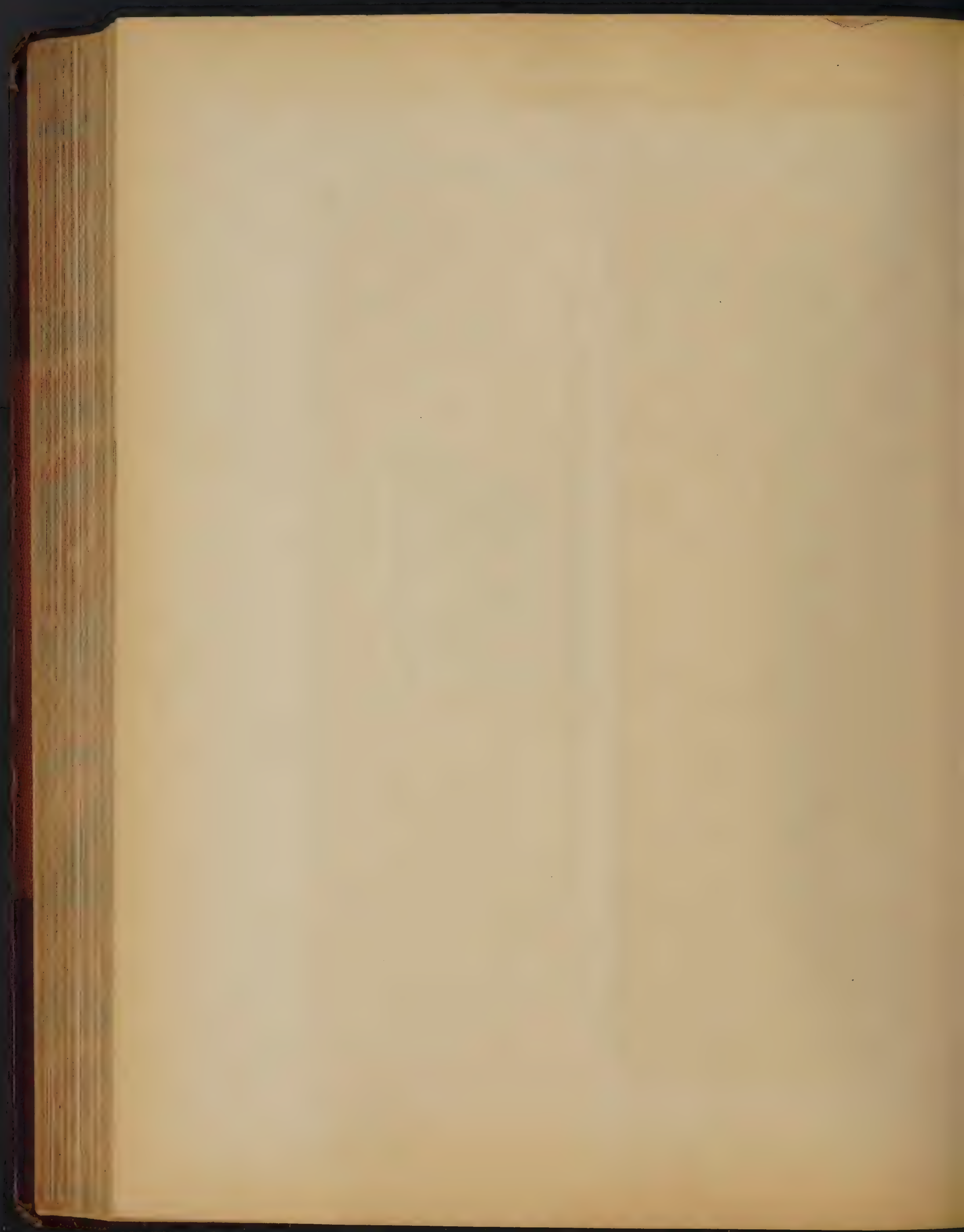
SIR,—Trusting to some Edinburgh student of Burns to put the editor of the *Bookworm* right as to the origin of the poem, "In Praise of the Potato," for such is the title, I delayed writing till I had seen to-night's *Dispatch*. Mr Roberts, on the authority of the *Seaforth Sun*, says "that the author of 'The Land of Burns' has received from Thomas M'Fadzean, of Walton, the following poem, which the writer says he can prove to be one of Burns's unpublished poems." I cannot guess who is meant by the author of "The Land of Burns"—the phrase is Hew Ainslie's, but if he knew the poets covered by the classic term he could settle the question of the authorship of "In Praise of the Potato" without waiting for Mr M'Fadzean's proof. If Mr M'Fadzean could trace the poem to Burns the probability is that he would have published his evidence along with the poem itself. Anyhow, his quotation—for such it is—consists of the first four verses (with unimportant variations) from a twelve-verse poem by A. Clerk, in a work entitled "Poems on Various Subjects," published in Dumfries in 1801. Clerk had no pretensions to originality. He even asserts that imitation is the virtue of an author; and in the present instance his imitation is obvious.—I am, &c. W. C. ANGUS.





**Scotch.** The literary sensation in Scotland during the month has been the exposure of the Burns forgeries, carried out with signal courage, ability, and success by Mr. Alexander Riach, editor of the Edinburgh *Evening Dispatch*. One notable feature of the correspondence was the evidence it supplied of the large literary culture which exists in Scotland. We may perhaps add that the facsimile of Burns which we published last January, was submitted before publication to the authorities of the British Museum, and to Mr. W. Craibe Angus, of Glasgow, who has taken a leading part in exposing the forgeries.

*Mr Colvill & Co  
Brookwood Surrey*





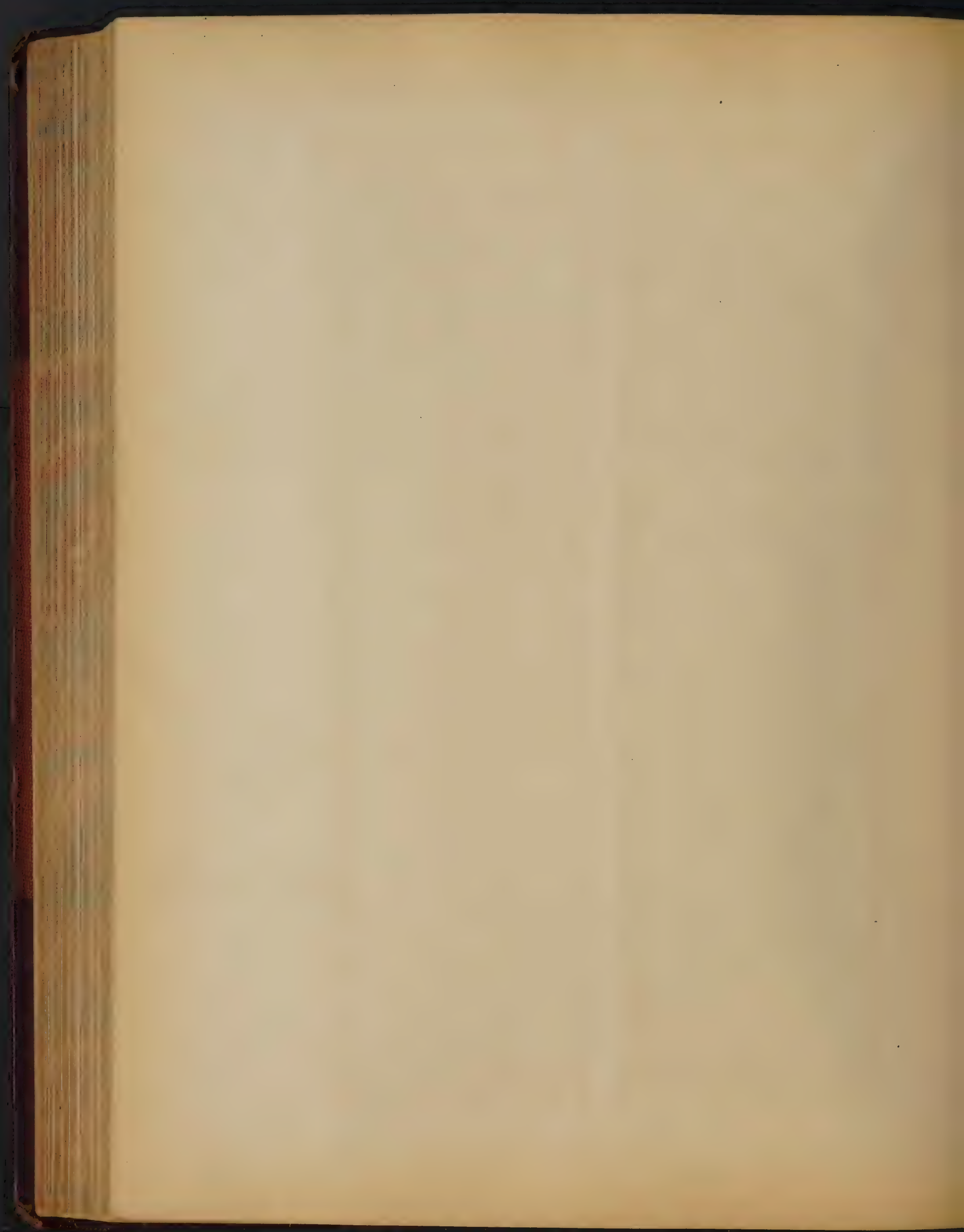
## A BAD BARGAIN.

THE autograph hunter and the gatherer of helograph manuscripts in general receive a cruel blow in an announcement just made. One of the chief of their tribe, Mr John S. Kennedy, a wealthy American banker and enthusiastic Scot, had gathered together 202 documents, seemingly exceeding precious in the ordinary every-day sense of the word, and not in the merely Bunthornian acceptation. These manuscripts were believed to be by Burns, Scott, Mary Queen of Scots, Rob Roy, Graham of Claverhouse, and other persons more or less eminent or notorious. They were purchased in Edinburgh, and were presented to the Lenox Library, New York. Whether Mr Kennedy had been startled into a condition of scepticism by recent events does not appear, but he sent his purchase to the British Museum, High Court of Appeal in such matters, that the papers might be looked into, and their claims as honest and virtuous MSS. adjudicated upon. But, alas! what was the result? Only one solitary document passed unscathed through the alembic of the experts! Only one of all the 202—rather less than a half per cent. One very remarkable result of the inquiry was to show that Mary Queen of Scots, Rob Roy, and "Bonnie Dundee" had been accustomed to use the same notepaper. Of course, there is nothing absolutely impossible in this. The Queen may have laid in a very large stock in the days when things went well with her, and what more natural than to suppose that some of it came finally into the hands of the Highland reiver and the gay cavalier! It is difficult to get up any great degree of sympathy for the victims of these forgeries. The gathering of MSS. has become very much of a fashion, and is pursued with great zeal, unheavened by discretion. The manufacture of documents had probably small beginnings, but, when the gudgeons showed themselves voracious and indiscriminating, the supply of bait was bound to increase. It was natural too that Burns should have been specially fastened upon by the producers of *fac-similes*. His was the most striking figure in the public eye, his penmanship is of a character easy to copy, and—be it said with all respect—the style of his letters is not difficult to imitate. The revelations may, after all, have a good effect. A vast deal of nonsense has of late years been written and talked about our national poet. If the exposures now in process lead people to read rather more of what Burns himself wrote, and rather less of what has been written by other people about him, then some little good will have been extracted from an evil which grew out of and was fostered by a mere fashionable craze.

## BURNS UP TO (AND BEYOND) DATE.

## I.

"Mr Kennedy, banker, New York, recently sent to the authorities of the British Museum a batch of Burns, Scott, and other manuscripts which he had presented to the Lenox Library, New York, and the genuineness of which he desired to have decided. Yesterday Mr Andrew Tod, Edinburgh, a relative of Mr Kennedy, received a communication from London to the effect that the whole of the manuscripts—about 200—with a solitary exception were forgeries." This extract from the *Herald* of the 11th inst. marks an important stage in the work of protecting Burns collectors which has now become almost as imperative as the Niebuhrisation of Burns biography. The verdict pronounced by the authorities of the British Museum is no doubt mortifying to Mr Kennedy. But he has done a wise and manly thing, and it is to be hoped, in the interests of the public, of truth, and of more than one immortal memory, that his example will be promptly followed by all private individuals and public bodies that are in possession of similar manuscripts which have not yet been submitted to experts. This revelation—taken along with other researches that are being conducted by a number of gentlemen, such as Mr Alexander Riach, of Edinburgh, and Mr Craibe Angus, of this city, to whom all lovers of literature ought to be warmly grateful—places it beyond all doubt that the forgery of manuscripts on a gigantic scale has prevailed in the past, if it does not prevail now. That Mr Kennedy should have come into possession of all the forged manuscripts is incredible. Let us hope that it is equally incredible that he alone should have the moral courage to ask the opinion of the one court that is competent to deal with "suspect" or unverified manuscripts. The enthusiasm that prompts or leads to the collection of the manuscripts or relics of truly (and not conventionally) great men is to be encouraged. It is freer from the dross of selfish motives than most enthusiasms. Besides it has led, in the past, and may lead in the future, to important literary discoveries. But such enthusiasm will be chilled, if not killed, if the men who have the means or inclination to gratify it feel that they are liable to be swindled at any moment. After the Kennedy revelations, the organisation of a Society of Archivists, or the formation of an "Original Manuscripts' Collectors' League," is—certainly it ought to be—an immediate necessity. To such a League or Society all fresh "original manuscripts," and, above all, those fearful and wonderful "hitherto unpublished letters" of which so much has been heard during the past few years, should in future be submitted in the first instance, an examination by experts following if necessary. It is greatly to be regretted indeed that such a Society or League had not been formed long ago. Many a fiery or forcibly feeble literary controversy would have been avoided. Many an editor and biographer would have been saved from useless bowdlerising, and still more useless moralising. Weak, if





"well-intentioned" Currie—(towards whom, by the way, except Mrs Dunlop and Burns's widow, was Currie really "well-intentioned" to an extent that merits the tepidest vote of thanks?)—might, for example, have been saved that falsification of the dates of the Burns-Dunlop correspondence, the discovery of which has rendered his account of the later years of the poet's life altogether unreliable.

## II.

There have recently been published two papers on Burns—more or less—which in very different ways indicate the necessity for a new life of the poet, to be undertaken in the Niebuhr spirit—the spirit of relentless and patient investigation for the sake of the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—and to be the work, not of one man, but of a Society or Editorial Committee of literary and other experts. The one is an article entitled "Burns at Kirkoswald," by Mr J. A. Westwood Oliver, which appears in the January number of *Macmillan's Magazine*. The other is a paper, "Highland Mary" in the Writings of Burns, in the new number of that valuable and well-conducted annual the "Burns Chronicle," to which "Mauchline and its Neighbourhood," by E. R., is obviously a postscript. Mr Oliver's paper is, if not of supreme biographical value, interesting and agreeably written. It is an attempt at least to throw some light on a period of Burns's early life of which little is known. It is neither pretentious nor dogmatical. Mr Oliver does not say that Burns ought to have done this, or even with confidence that he actually did that—without positive evidence. There is nothing in the paper savouring of the snivel-and-drivel school of Burns criticism, unless it be a common-place allusion to "the habit that was destined to darken with its shadow the whole course of his after life." Mr Oliver's main object in writing his paper is to publish a letter which he firmly believes to have been written by Burns in 1782, and a poem which he thinks may have come from the same pen. Probably enough this letter, which purports to be from Burns to a young farmer friend, Thomas Orr, is genuine. But Mr Oliver speaks with too great confidence on this subject. "Apart from the handwriting, which is easily recognisable, it bears the stamp of Burns in every line." After the Kennedy revelations, who will venture to say that Burns's handwriting is "easily recognisable?" It is further to be noted that Burns is represented as signing his name "Robert Burns." It was not till 1787 that he gave up his habit of signing his name "Burness." As for the letter "bearing the stamp of Burns in every line," what is there of the poet, who by 1782 had written "Mary Morison," in a sentence like "such has been the backwardness of our harvest, and so seldom are we at Ayr, that I have scarcely had one opportunity of sending a line to you?" Here we have one dear, amiable youth inquiring in a kindly and even formal fashion after another. The rest of the letter, with its quotation from Pope, its neat epigrams, and its pretty Blair's Sermonical, "Go on and prosper, and if you miss happiness by enjoyment you will find it by contented resignation," is rather conventional. But, then, Burns did some things in a conventional style. Thus, there is some reason to believe that he blew his nose in the ordinary civilised way, and with the aid of a pocket handkerchief, and not in accordance with the good old rule, the simple plan, still affected by certain hyperboreans, and which is suggestive of economy rather than of either efficiency or elegance. The mere fact

that there is not, so far as I am aware (I am, however, quite open to correction), a single allusion either to nose or to handkerchief in the whole of Scott Douglas speaks six volumes for this belief. So this letter may be from the pen of Burns. But Mr Oliver would do well to submit the manuscript to competent authorities, if he has not already done so. As for the poem, one must, with all respect to Mr Oliver and his ingenious Shenstonian theory, absolutely decline to accept as Burns's,

Let us, my dear Stella, the garden survey  
And make our remarks on the flowers.

It is quite as difficult to conjure up a vision of Burns and the charming fillette about whom he "crazed the faculties of his soul," making remarks on the flowers, as it is to picture the passionate French lover in Madame de Staël's novel exclaiming—"Adieu, adieu, my dearest Delphine, I will give you a call to-morrow," as he was made to do by that unfortunate author's English translator. When all this is said, however, Mr Oliver's article merits a kindly welcome. The spirit in which he conducts his investigation into the authorship of the "Stella" poem is the spirit in which the final biography of Burns will be written.

## III.

Mr Eric Robertson has a mission. In his paper, "Highland Mary" in the Writings of Burns, we see it through a glass darkly. "Is it not time," he asks, "for the lovers of Burns to rescue noble Jean Armour from the obscurity into which she has been relegated by believers in an idealised 'Highland Mary?' I believe that a biography of Jean, following the interesting lines of the short sketch by Mr Burns Begg in last year's 'Chronicle,' would truthfully make her out to be one of the noblest women ever associated with a great Poet, and a much more human reality than the Highland 'Vision of Delight' conjured up by Burns for succeeding generations of Mariolaters." The majority of sensible Burnsians are neither Mariolaters nor Jeanomaniacs. They are not unjust to "noble Jean Armour." They admit how devotedly she discharged her duties according to her lights as Burns's wife, how lovingly she cherished and how bravely she defended his memory after his death—above everything, how with silent dignity she performed the task of bringing up her children deprived, as they had been, of their father when she was little more than a girl. I know only of one man worth Mr Robertson's (or anybody else's) powder and shot who has attacked Jean Armour. Mr R. L. Stevenson has, possibly in mere youthful thoughtlessness, made—and has not yet substantiated or withdrawn—against Jean Armour one of the most serious charges that a living man could make against a dead woman. Without producing any evidence in support of his statement, he says of the first intimacy between Burns and Jean—"This facile and empty-headed girl had nothing more in view than a flirtation; and her heart from the first and on to the end of her story was engaged by another man." Mr Stevenson returns to this charge; he says, with Zolaesque realism, "Jean, with her heart elsewhere, succumbed to his fascination." By all means let Mr Robertson extort from Mr Stevenson the proofs of this cruel charge, or force him to withdraw it and apologise. By all means let him write a biography that will do justice to Jean Armour. But he in turn has incurred a grave responsibility. With a view to elevating Jean Armour and destroying an innocuous Mariolatry—which





after all amounts to nothing more than a general belief that Burns's attachment to Mary Campbell was of the kind popularly known as "innocent," that as Emeritus Professor Nichol puts it, "his white rose grew up and bloomed in the midst of his passion-flowers"—he has deemed it his duty to seek to hint away the good name of a poor girl who apparently has no relatives left to defend her memory. This Mr Robertson will not deny. There are two mysterious sentences in his paper which must be quoted. Speaking of the "romance," the "cult," the "idolatry" of which Mary Campbell is the centre, he says:—"A few critics who have gone fully into the history of Burns's Mossgiel period are in possession of further information which it is not considered desirable to publish till the chain of evidence is reliable in every link." In his paper on "Mauchline and its neighbourhood," which, with its "plan," pretty photographic views, and painstaking topographic investigations, is both interesting and valuable to the student of Burns, he makes allusion to the Elbow Tavern "where Train says Burns and Richmond and Captain Montgomery came together in somewhat strange circumstances." (Presumably this is the same Train to whose "doubtful story of Burns capturing a smuggling craft and buying four carriages" Mr Scott Douglas makes allusion.) Till this "further information" is forthcoming—or an intimation is afforded that it is not worth giving—fair-minded men will wait patiently. Mr Robertson, however, makes in his paper an insinuation against Mary, and still more against Burns, which must be considered at once. This (italics and all) is the way in which Mr Robertson quotes the celebrated passage—from Burns's notes to the set of "Johnson's Museum" that he annotated for Mr Robert Riddell—in which the story of Highland Mary is told. "My Highland lassie was a warm-hearted, charming young creature as ever blessed a man with generous love. After a pretty long tract of the most ardent reciprocal attachments, we met by appointment, on the second Sunday of May, in a sequestered spot by the banks of Ayr, where we spent the day in taking a farewell before she should embark for the West Highlands to arrange matters among her friends for her projected change of life. At the close of the Autumn following she crossed the sea to meet me at Greenock, where she was seized with a malignant fever, which hurried my dear girl to the grave in a few days, before I could hear of her illness." On this passage, backed up by the tone of "Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary" and "My Highland Lassie," and by the Bibles presented to Mary and still preserved, most readers of Burns's story have come to the conclusion that he intended to meet her—as his betrothed—in Greenock previous to leaving for Jamaica, and then either taking her with him as his wife or making arrangements for sending to Scotland for her after he found himself in a position to do so. But Mr Robertson, by his italicised passages and his comments on them, endeavours to put a different complexion on the relation between Burns and Mary. "To one familiar with Burns's phraseology and style of thought regarding young women, the phrase (beginning *blessed*) that I have italicised in this carefully worded note must suggest reflection. He was writing in this note to a high-living squire, whose notions about such love-attachments were probably too familiar to Burns; consequently the exact meaning to be attributed to the words we can only guess at in the connection indicated. Finally we have to notice the studied ambiguity of the phrase about Mary's preparation for her projected change of life." It must suffice

at present to say that it is not my opinion that marriage is by any means necessarily indicated by these ambiguous words." What right has Mr Robertson to describe Mr Robert Riddell as a "high-living" (and apparently low-thinking) squire? He was, it is true, one of the heroes of the "Whistle" competition in alcoholisation; but one orgie does not involve systematic "high living." This "squire" was "trusty Glenriddell," who took an interest in coins, who, with Burns's help, established a village library, and who to his dying day did not forgive Burns for being rude (in his opinion) at the dinner-table to his connection Mrs Maria Riddell! This is a small matter however. Does Mr Robertson mean to insinuate that Robert Burns was guilty of the cynical blackguardism—rendered doubly cynical by the giving of the Bibles—of seducing Mary Campbell without intending to make her his wife, and that he was capable, years after, of concocting more than one hideous *double entendre* about the intrigue for the delectation of "a high-living squire?" If he does not mean that, what does he mean? And yet whatever he wishes to convey is based on *generous love* and *her projected change of life*. The favourite meaning attached to "generous" in the dictionaries is "noble," "magnanimous," "honourable"—and these are precisely the characteristics which popular belief has assigned to Mary's love for Burns. As for the phrase, "her projected change in life," which Mr Robertson attributes to Burns, which he italicises, which he repeats without italics, and which he says does not necessarily indicate marriage, will it be believed that what Burns wrote was not "her projected change of life," which might be twisted into "becoming a mother," but "our projected change of life," which means marriage or is sheer nonsense? Mr Robertson has, I have said, incurred a serious responsibility in throwing out such hints as he has done in an annual intended mainly for the reading of members of Burns clubs. Does not this extraordinary misquotation, which vitiates what ordinary readers must regard as Mr Robertson's argument, indicate how very grave that responsibility is? I refrain from saying more on this point. I do not require to say more.

#### IV.

"Further information" and present suggestions apart, Mr Robertson's paper on "Highland Mary" in the writings of Burns is an old story. It is a revival of the ancient belief in a kind of conspiracy of silence, if not of mystification, in regard to Mary Campbell, in which Burns, his relatives (especially his brother Gilbert), and hers took part. Mr Robertson is quite entitled to explain this real or supposed conspiracy if he can. But after reading his paper one is tempted to ask if he brings to the very desirable work of elucidating the life of Burns the necessary endowment of accurate information upon matters of fact. The character of several of his statements, small and great, justifies this question. Referring to "The Lass of Ballochmyle," he speaks of Burns's "flirtation with Miss Alexander." Can Mr Robertson point out when or where Burns had what may by any possibility be regarded as a "flirtation" with Miss Alexander? Can he prove that Burns ever spoke to Miss Alexander? Among the circumstances in connection with the relation between Burns and Mary





Campbell of which he writes generally "it is not disputed by any of his recent biographers," is, "in this period (April or May, 1786) he (Burns) wrote about Mary Campbell the poem entitled 'Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,' 'Afton Water,' and 'My Highland Lassie, O.'" He subsequently emphasises this "not disputed" statement by saying in connection with "Highland Mary"—"these three poems"—obviously "Highland Mary," "Afton Water," and "Will ye go to the Indies"—"were all written (as Scott Douglas has proved) in 1786." "Will ye go to the Indies" and "My Highland Lassie" may well be believed to have been written about 1786, because Burns has said of the one, "In my very early years, when I was thinking of going to the West Indies, I took the following farewell of a dear girl," and of the other, "This was a composition of mine in very early life, before I was known at all in the world"—"the world" meaning in this association, as most folks will allow, that particular world to which he was introduced by his visit to Edinburgh. But Mr Robertson has appealed to Scott Douglas. To Scott Douglas let us go. Will it be believed that of this "not disputed" song of "Afton Water" Scott Douglas writes, "Did the living Mary Campbell inspire it? Or was it composed in 1791, five years after her death, in a reverie of retrospective admiration of her sleeping image 'enshrined within his bosom's core?'" Mr Robertson says Scott Douglas has "proved" that "Highland Mary" was written in 1786. To Scott Douglas again let us go. He refers to "Highland Mary" as "these deeply affecting verses, which are perhaps even less artificial than the 'Address to Mary in Heaven,' produced three years before on the banks of the Nith in Ellisland." In short "Highland Mary" was produced three years after "Mary in Heaven," and no Mr Scott Douglas is required to tell us when "Mary in Heaven" was produced.

Speaking of Mary Campbell's family, Mr Robertson says "They did not put into the form of any record or account what they knew of Mary and Burns. The accounts they gave to inquirers were so loose and so conflicting that no dependence whatever can be placed upon them." It is thus that Mr Robertson disposes of the circumstantial stories told regarding Mary and her relatives by Hogg and Motherwell, and of such explicit statements as this about her mother by Chambers—"She learned to sing the song of 'The Highland Lassie' to her grandchildren. On being asked by her grand-nephew, Mr J. C. Douglas, if she thought that Mary would have married Burns, she said that she could not tell what might have happened if Mary had survived, but she did not think her sweet lassie could ever have been happy with so wild and profane a genius as Burns—yet she would immediately add that he was 'a real warm-hearted chield,' for such was the impression he had made upon her when he had subsequently paid her a visit. The old woman spoke of Mary, who was the eldest of her eight children, as a paragon of gentleness and amiability." Yet Mr Robertson has no objection to believing that this same Chambers—so easily thrown over—has "proved" that "in the spring of 1786 Burns had no fewer than three love entanglements—namely, with Jean Armour, Mary Campbell, and Elizabeth Miller." Again, "the only facts we ascertain from them (Mary's family) for certain are that Burns's letters to Mary were destroyed (either by Mary's father or by her brother) and that a brother pasted pieces of paper over the signatures of Burns in the volume of the Bible he gave to Mary. Is this second "fact"

quite so "certain" as Mr Robertson thinks? To Scott Douglas again let him go, and he will find that editor conjecturing that it was Mary herself who, resenting her lover's (possible) neglect, did the pasting.

May it not be suggested to Mr Robertson that some very simple reasons will serve to explain away certain of the facts he boggles over? May Burns, for example, not have refrained from including "Will ye go to the Indies?" and "My Highland Lassie, O," in the Kilmarnock and Edinburgh editions of his poems simply because he did not think much of their literary merit? We know that he said of the former "It is quite trifling." He did not give "The Jolly Beggars" to the public. For the very obvious reason, Mr Robertson may reply, that he did not wish to offend the public by that "breadth" of humour and sentiment which characterises it, and which, only a few years ago, was too much for the late Principal Shairp. If Burns, as the husband of Jean Armour, preserved silence as to his relations with Mary Campbell, or even indulged in a little mystification about them, may this not have been done for the equally obvious reason that he did not wish his wife to know that immediately after her desertion of him (as he considered her conduct) he turned ("reverted," say some biographers) to another girl? Mr Robertson sees something deep and dark in Burns not substituting Mary's name for Jean's in the copy of "The Vision" which appeared in the Kilmarnock edition. The familiar lines are:—

"An' such a leg! My bonie Jean  
Could only peer it."

For "my bonie Jean" Burns substituted "my Bess, I ween." Mr Robertson evidently does not see—what Dr Hatley Waddell saw—that this omission gives remarkable support to the "white rose" theory of his passion for Mary, and encourages the belief that he did not—because he could not—write of her as he wrote of Jean and Bess.

Is it necessary to say more by way of demonstrating how rashly and with what imperfect preparation Mr Robertson, although he is a scholar, and has earned a title to be spoken of with high respect as a lover of Letters and of Art, has entered upon his self-appointed and nowise delectable task? He is quite in earnest, it is plain, in his desire to do justice to Jean Armour, but if, to accomplish this work, he must dethrone Highland Mary, he will have to produce a very different paper from that which he has now published. But in truth the condition of Burns' biography, which permits of such attacks as Mr Stevenson's on Jean Armour and Mr Robertson's on Highland Mary being made at all, is little short of an intolerable scandal. It can only be remedied by the preparation of an exhaustive and final Life by a Society or Editorial Committee of Specialists. And if the Burns Clubs throughout the country with their funds and their enthusiasm cannot through some organisation start this enterprise without delay and give it the sanction of their collective authority, the Scottish public will certainly ask what at this time of day their funds and their enthusiasm are good for.

W. W.





## Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.

EDINBURGH, FRIDAY, January 20, 1893.

MR CRAIBE ANGUS publishes an article on Professor Eric Robertson's attack on Highland Mary.

THE righteous protest which Mr Craibe Angus makes to-day against the indiscretion—or worse—of Professor Eric Robertson in raking up an old and quite unauthenticated story about Burns' "Highland Mary" will be reciprocated by every one who has read the Professor's accusations, or rather innuendoes, in the new edition of the "Burns Chronicle," and it is further particularly timely in view of the anniversary of the Poet, and the many gatherings which that event occasions. The good work of demolishing the whole vile story has already been well done by a writer in the *Glasgow Herald*, and Mr Angus fitly completes the congenial task. We confess that we do not understand the object of Professor Robertson in reviving the tale at this time, and still less the action of the editor of the "Burns Chronicle" in giving currency to one of the meanest and most improbable of the stories with which the name of Burns has been unjustly coupled. Either the whole of the known facts on which the story is based were known to the editor, as there seems little doubt they were known to Professor Robertson, or they were not; if the former, he must have perceived that the foundation for the offensive fiction was not sufficient on which to hang a dog, while, if he did not know, surely an enthusiast who has at heart the fair fame of Burns and one of his most cherished heroines might be expected to adopt a policy of caution, and wait for the confirmation which is being sought for. But it is being sought in vain, and we shall be surprised, if Professor Robertson does not himself admit this. The name of Highland Mary, "obscure" though her personality and life history may be, will ever be enshrined in the nation's heart as the subject of some of the tenderest poems of Burns, and it is worse than an insult to his memory to suggest that he immortalised as an angel one who, if Professor Robertson is to be believed, was among the basest of her sex. We hope, however, that he has already come to recognise that his action is unfortunate, and that his innuendoes are incapable of being sustained by evidence that is worthy of a moment's consideration.

### "BURNS MSS."

SIR,—I send you a specimen of what I take to be a modern-antique found on a shop window in the

### BURNS MSS

Heaven keep ye free frae care & strife  
Till far ayont four score  
And while ye toddle on through life  
Neer gang by DRYSDALE'S door

"Auld Grey Toon." If it is not an original Burns, it at least shows that the *Dispatch* articles have had an extraordinary effect.—I am, &c. HAJJL.





BURNS UP TO DATE.

SIR,—I have read with interest the article signed "W. W." in your issue of Saturday, January 14, and also a letter published the following Thursday. It cannot be doubted by those who have carefully followed the details of the Highland Mary incident, as narrated by various biographers of the poet, that Burns's conduct in this particular case was innocent throughout. No one admires more than myself the generous and manly character of our national poet; but when so much rubbish is nowadays written about the purity of his domestic relations, and the innocence and simplicity of his life, the temptation offered to those who are better informed to risk everything and tell all they know must sometimes be very great. It is now the fashion to quote Scott Douglas, and discredit the work of Robert Chambers (really the poet's greatest biographer), whose information, according to "W. W.," is "so easily thrown over;" but Chambers had at any rate the merit of knowing what to publish and what to lay aside, which can hardly be said of Scott Douglas. As Robert Chambers's grandson I inherited the bulk of his papers, and now possess much information bearing upon the darker side of the poet's character. This information shall never be made public, but I will be glad to show some of my papers to an "editorial committee of specialists," as suggested by your correspondent. The following letter from Isabella Begg (Burns's niece) to Robert Chambers may be of interest as relating both to Mary Campbell and Jean Armour. Some of the information contained in it was used by Dr Chambers, but considerably toned down:—

"Bridg-house, Ayr,  
19th January, 1850.

"Dear Sir,—Your friend Mr Douglas is perfectly correct with regard to Burns and his Highland Mary's short love passage; it was in 1786—just as you suppose, at least so my mother has always thought from a revulsion of feeling attendant on the heartless desertion of Jean Armour, and from a feeling on his part something very like disgust at her unwomanly conduct. I verily believe she was then the very last woman in the world he would have thought of as his wife. He just then became acquainted with Mary Campbell, who was acting as nursemaid in the family of Gavin Hamilton, which situation she left to become dairymaid at Coilsfield. I said he just then became acquainted with her, but he must have known her previous to that, though his *love fit* had only begun then, and I do verily believe Mr Douglas is quite right (though I always thought my uncle above deception of any kind), he must have mystified the thing—and no wonder; it must have required a poet's license to go through so much love in so short a space of time. Early in spring his certificate of marriage with Jean Armour was destroyed; then from that time till the end of autumn is the period of his idolatry for Mary Campbell. My mother has no doubt but he meant to marry her, but what were his plans for their future life she has no idea, unless they were, indeed, intending to cross the Atlantic together; but his family knew nothing of his attachment to Highland Mary till after the publishing of his poems in Edinburgh. My mother thinks my Uncle Gilbert must have known, as he expressed no surprise at reading the poems connected with her. My mother never saw Highland Mary, but knew her to be the daughter of a small farmer in Campbeltown. Where she came from to Gavin Hamilton's she knows not, but there the poet first became acquainted with her. She only knew of her in these two situations. Now, John Blane was a servant with her in G. Hamilton's, and my mother thinks he might have given correct information there. All she recollects of ever hearing Burns say of Mary was to John Blane while she was hard at work in the kitchen at Mossiel. He said, 'Mary would not trust herself with me in the old castle.' G. H. lived in what is still termed the Old Castle of Mauchline. She died at Greenock. My mother always understood that she died in the house of a married sister there. She also recollects well of his receiving a letter of her death from Greenock. She was struck with his look of agony on reading the letter, but he immediately left the kitchen without uttering a syllable. Either my grandmother or one of my aunts were assisting her with the 'wast' (spinning wheel). None else were present except my uncle Gilbert, who ironically asked if this was more love pledges, but Robert retired without a word of reply. . . . Now when Jean Armour in all her giddy folly beset his path again, everyone

blamed her for the manner in which she threw herself in his way. Now his enemies might compliment him there; though great were his errors, yet he never, Adam-like, cast the blame on his partner, but strove to defend them and take all the blame upon himself. But it is needless talking: time will do much for his name by obliterating his faults and showing his generous nature in all its manly truth. Excuse me writing at such length, for really I sometimes forget myself when writing of him to one so friendly as yourself. My mother's sleeping powers are quite restored, and she will be most happy to answer any questions that may occur to you.—Yours truly, "ISABELLA BEGG."

So much for the recollections of Burns's own sister. The term "noble" seems an exaggeration as applied to Jean Armour, at any rate during the early part of her career. Although Mr Stevenson's opinion of her is in the main correct, it is difficult to understand his statement that "her affections were all along bestowed elsewhere." No prior attachment, so far as I can discover, is mentioned in any account of her life hitherto published.

Burns's "flirtation" with Miss Alexander is, of course, published, as he never spoke to the lady in his life. Robert Chambers visited Miss Alexander at Ballechnyle on Monday, October 9th, 1837, and I have his diary, written up the same day, which contains the whole story of the incidents from which the poem originated, as told by Miss Alexander herself. In conclusion, I may state that Dr Chambers certainly did prove that Burns had three love entanglements in the spring of 1786, and could have proved more had he chosen, as I might be able to do now.—I am, &c.,

C. E. S. CHAMBERS.

\* Mr William Douglas was at this time collecting information as to the date of Burns's attachment to Highland Mary. The result of his investigations was published in the *Scotsman* of January 25, 1850.

TRANSLATIONS OF BURNS.

January 26, 1893.

SIR,—In the interesting and generally sound article by Mr J. Young in your issue of to-day I was surprised to see that, in reference to some recent correspondent who had rejected the third verse of "O' a' the airts" because of the expression "neat and clean," the author seems to accept this verse as by Burns. The two verses beginning "Blaw saft ye westlan' breeze" and "What sighs and vows" are given in M'Kay's Kilmarnock edition (and others) as having been added by John Hamilton, music-seller, Edinburgh, in 1814. Burns never used the word "clean" in any but the classic sense of reference to perfection in shape, as in the example quoted from "Oh were I on Parnassus hill." Your correspondent "Crito" made the same error, and on it based a sneer at the poet; but I should not have felt a wish to draw attention to the matter on his account, as he seems to be a superior sort of person, to whom a thoughtful study of Burns originals would doubtless appear not worth while. I do not think the use of the verb "appeler" by De Wailly in his rendering of "Ca' the yowes" warrants Mr Young in saying that he was tripped by the word, as he had no other word equivalent to "drive" as it is expressed, in the word "ca'," and the rest of his work does not lead one to suspect him of a slip like this.—I am, &c.,

PHÆDO.

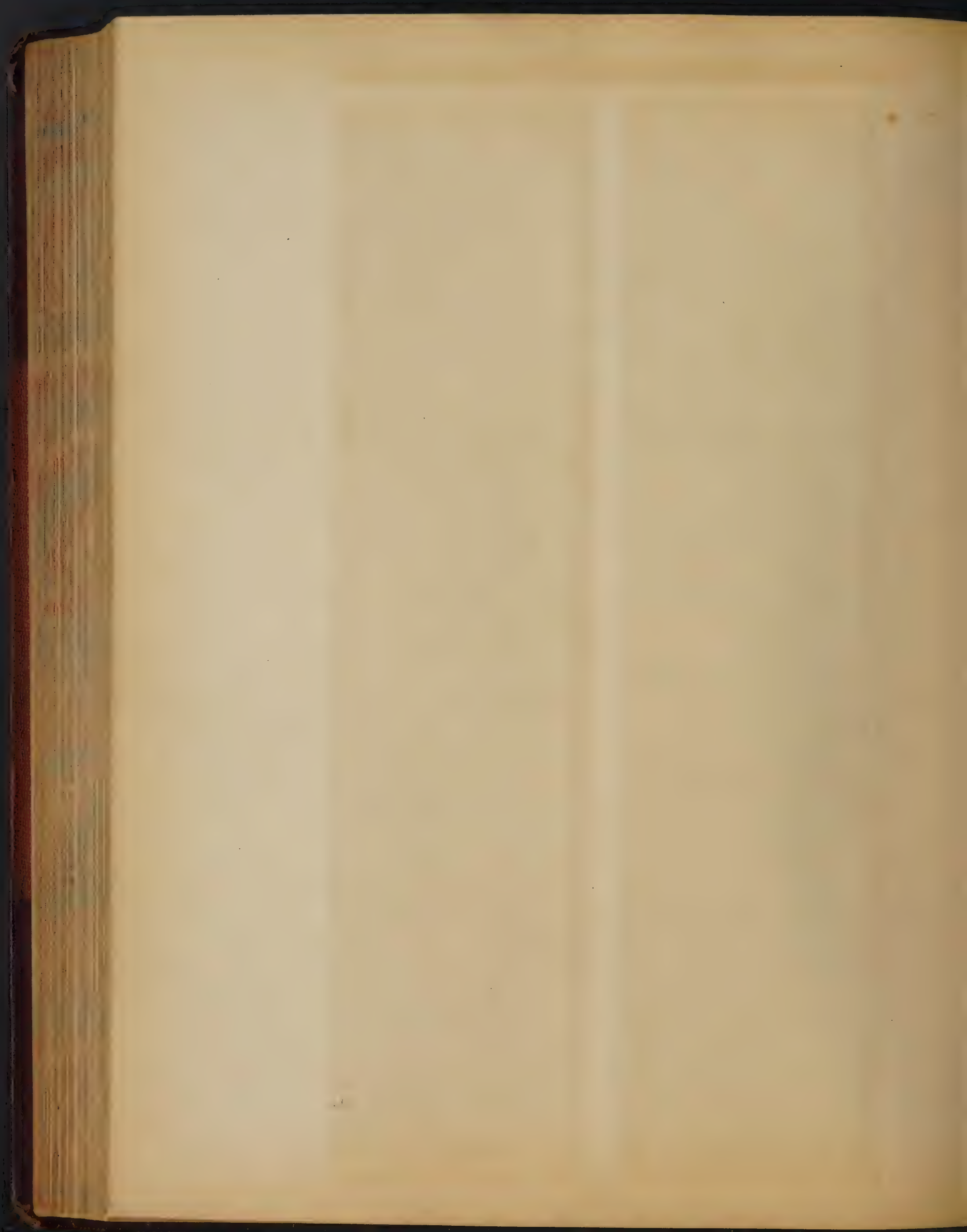
January 26.

SIR,—In his interesting article on "Translations of Burns" Mr J. Young rather derides the idea that "new-ca'd" means "newly-calved" in the line—

"While new-ca'd kye rowt at the stake."

Yet that is simply the meaning, neither more nor less. What farmer would have his cows called home an hour before milking time? Everybody who has been in the country knows that cows, especially in the first weeks after calving, when there is a large flow of milk, often come lowing to be milked long before the regular time. It was when April was three weeks gone, and when most of his cows were newly calved, that Burns took advantage of "this hour on e'enin's edge" to write to Lapraik; and so vividly and correctly are the sounds of the farm called up by his first line, that one wonders how it could be misunderstood. Nor is it a matter of inference at all, for it is perfectly common at the present day to hear people in the country talk of "new-ca'd kye," and there is never a doubt about the meaning.—I am, &c.,

J. MEIKLE.





## BURNS IN ART.

No. II.

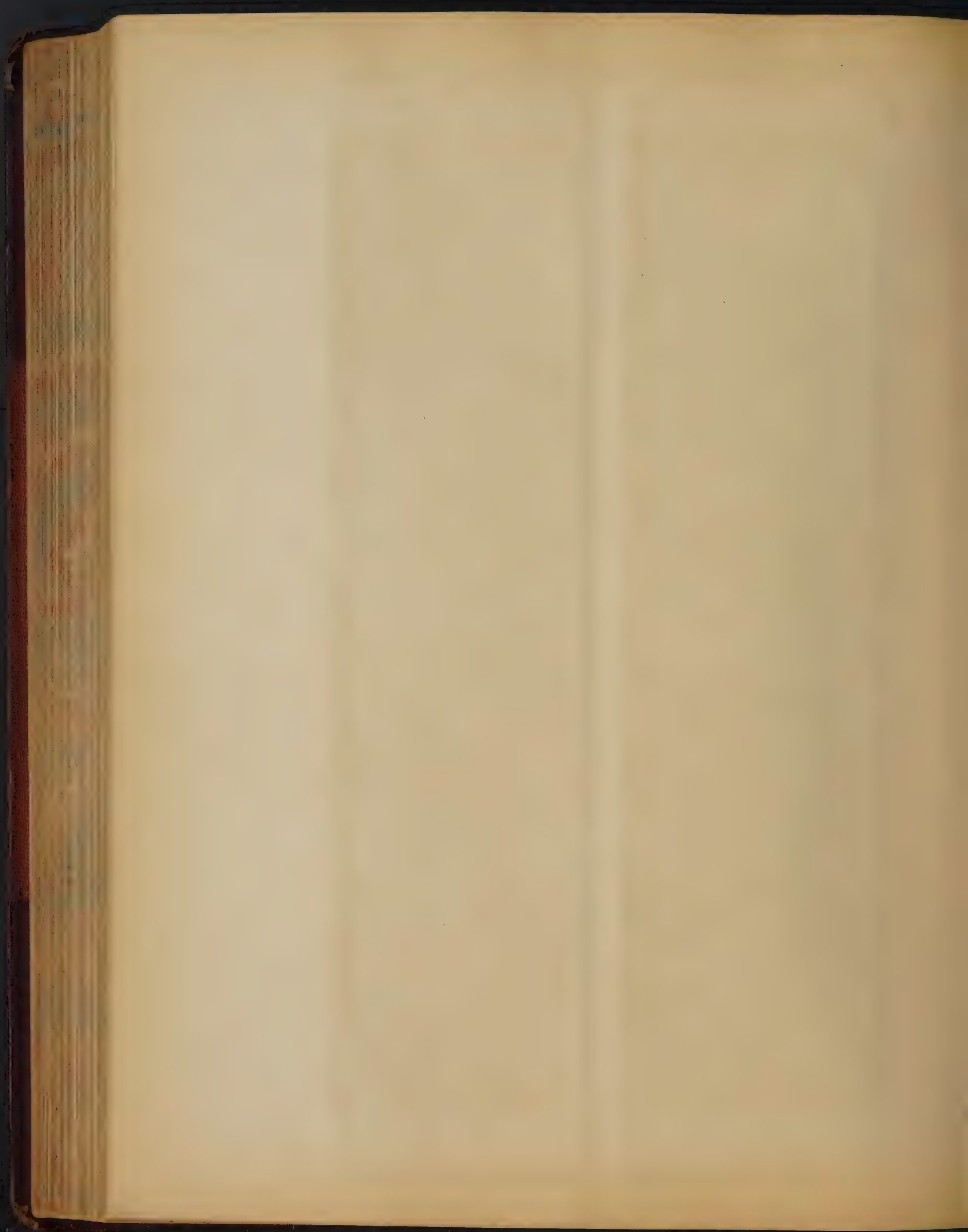
John Burnet, engraver and painter, a fellow student of Sir David Wilkie, was one of the first to illustrate Burns on an extensive scale. His designs, upwards of twenty in number, appeared in an edition of the poems published in Edinburgh in 1811. Nearly every poem of importance received its interpretation, but in remarkably few instances does the interpretation harmonise with the spirit of Burns. Lack of movement and an absence of intelligent appreciation of the subsidiary points of the poems are the most conspicuous faults of Burnet's work. As engravings they approach marvellously near perfection; which is to be expected in the work of a man who asked three hundred guineas for engraving Wilkie's *Rabbit on the Wall*. A small example of Burnet's work in oil may be seen in the Corporation Galleries. It is at once the only canvas by that artist and the only Burns picture possessed by the Corporation. Perhaps one example of Burnet is enough; whether it is creditable that the Corporation of the largest city in Scotland can only show one picture interpretative of the peer of Scottish poets is a question not difficult to answer. And such a picture as the one is! The catalogue declares it to be a "Tam o' Shanter," but it has little affinity with the poem of that name. The visitor who cares to listen may often hear the *vox populi* expressing an opinion on that picture, and it is generally an opinion of a kind which would have troubled the soul of the worthy artist not a little. This may not count for much with most pictures, but in the case of a "Tam o' Shanter" it is a fatal verdict.

Burns has seldom had a more sympathetic interpreter than he secured a little more than sixty years ago in the person of Thomas Landseer, the elder brother of the famous painter of that name. Thomas Landseer occupies a commanding position in the school of British engravers, and his delicate reproductions of his brother's most striking pictures rendered yeoman service in making their family name familiar as household words in nearly every home in these isles. Occasionally Thomas Landseer laid aside the graver for the pencil, and when he did so to illustrate "Tam o' Shanter" and the "Address to the Deil" it was with no ordinary measure of success. The illustrations to these poems were published separately in slim pamphlet form in 1830. The "Tam o' Shanter" contained five whole-page drawings, extended to sixteen pages, and was published at the price of two shillings; the "Address to the Deil" had seven whole-page plates, numbered twenty-three pages, and was sold for three shillings and sixpence. The "Tam o' Shanter" is by far the abler performance of the two, but that is a verdict by no means detrimental to the "Address to the Deil;" for the interpretation of the former poem is, in its general level of excellence, about the most successful British art can boast of. Mr Landseer concentrated his thought on the five most critical moments of the poem—the cottage where Tam's spouse sat "nursing her wrath to keep it warm," the ingle-nook of the inn consecrated to Souter Johnny's "queerest stories," the approach of Tam to the luridly-lit walls of Kirk-Alloway; the mad dance of warlocks

and witches within the sacred building; and the final triumph of Meg at the cost of her good gray tail. It is not difficult to agree with the opinion of a Glasgow second-hand bookseller that these five drawings of "Tam o' Shanter" are "the best that have ever been published." Perhaps it would be safer to say that their only rivals for that place of honour are the designs by George Cruikshank mentioned above. The illustrations of the "Address to the Deil" are based upon stanzas V., VII. and VIII., IX., XII., XIII., XV. and XVI., and XVII., and, although not equal to the designs in the "Tam o' Shanter," they all faithfully interpret the spirit of the text, and several of them are triumphs of no mean order. Both these pamphlets are now exceedingly rare. In a recent catalogue the "Address to the Deil" was priced at 12s 6d, and the "Tam o' Shanter" at 8s 6d. But the latter has fetched a much higher price, for a copy once changed hands in a Glasgow sale-room at the figure of 18s. Twenty years ago a Paisley bookseller offered a big pile of the "Tam o' Shanter" for 3d a copy!

A series of outline drawings, somewhat in the manner of Flaxman's illustrations to Homer and Dante, was executed for the Diamond Edition of Burns's work by James Stewart, who is best remembered as the engraver of several of Wilkie's pictures. Perhaps Stewart's drawings are most remarkable for their departure from orthodox interpretations. For instance, in the picture of "Rent Day," drawn to illustrate "The Twa Dogs," it is a woman who is tholing the factor's snash, and by all appearance she is holding her own in the wordy battle, and not at all overawed by her moneyless condition. Again, in "Willie Brew'd a Peck o' Maut" we look in vain for a portrait of the poet. The most successful of Stewart's illustrations are those interpretative of "Auld Lang Syne," "The Jolly Beggars," and "Death and Dr Hornbook." The first is characterised by a welcome air of spontaneity; the second, though rather too self-conscious, is almost Hogarthian in its wealth of suggestive detail; and the third hits off in a happy fashion the poet's whisky-bred unconcern at his encounter with Death.

Passing over the work of Richard Westall—who gave lessons in drawing to the Queen before she came to the throne—C. Muss, W. H. Brooke, C. R. Leslie, W. and D. Lizars, T. Unwins, T. Watt, and J. Scott, justice demands that pause be taken to make honourable mention of the industry and talent Mr John Faed, R.S.A., has devoted to illustrating the text of his great fellow-countryman. Nearly forty years ago Mr Faed was requested by the Royal Association for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Scotland to prepare a series of illustrations to the poems of Burns, and he elected to work on "The Cottar's Saturday Night," "Tam o' Shanter," and "The Soldier's Return." For each of these poems, he writes, he made a series of careful drawings in black and white, which drawings, after they had been engraved, went as prizes to the subscribers. There are eight illustrations to "The Cottar's Saturday Night," and six to each of the other two poems. In spite of careful study and admirable draughtsmanship, it cannot be said that Mr Faed was particularly successful in interpreting "The Cottar's Saturday Night" or "The Soldier's Return." While several of the pictures in these series could hardly be more happily conceived, yet taken as a whole they fail in that harmonious sequence which is so apparent in the poems they portray. The hero and heroine of "The Soldier's Return" are far too refined for the actors in that drama; this carefully-brushed son of Mars and this soft-skinned maiden might have lived in Arcady. The same fault is manifest in the second picture of the "Tam o' Shanter" set. Otherwise that series is worthy of hearty praise. From the cottage interior, where Tam's wrathful dame keeps her sleepless vigil, to the brig where the plucky old mare foiled the hurrying pack of warlocks and witches, the story is unfolded with rare dramatic skill. Mr Faed has revelled in the witches' dance, and has drawn a Nannie





who would have pleased the poet himself, even had he been as great a judge of female beauty as he is often erroneously supposed to have been. At various times Mr Faed has extended into oil paintings several of the sketches he made for these Burns pictures, and the number will be increased at the forthcoming exhibition of the Institute of Fine Arts in Glasgow, to which the artist is sending a painting based upon one of his sketches for "The Soldier's Return."

Perhaps the most wholesale illustrator of Burns was J. M. Wright, whose forty odd designs were engraved in steel for that ambitious edition of the Poet's works published in 1838 by George Virtue. Mr Virtue's grandson, Mr Herbert Virtue, still possesses the original water-colour sketches from which the engravings were made. It would be pleasant to be able honestly to praise Mr Wright's arduous labours, but truth demands that praise be rigidly restricted to his intentions. Mr Wright appears to have had three ideas about Scotsmen and things Scottish—first, that every male head in Caledonia is always covered with a Tam o' Shanter bonnet; second, that the "lugget caup" is never removed from the table; and, third, that every Scotsman is on all occasions accompanied by a collie dog. Three admirable ideas, but just a trifle wearisome when reiterated through forty pictures. Although many of Mr Wright's drawings reveal a conscientious study of the poems they are intended to interpret, there is hardly one which can be said to embody the spirit of Burns. His lovers are mostly Byronic youths indulging liberally in mock pathos, and his peasants would pass muster for gentlemen farmers. Who would dream, for instance, that the tenant facing the factor in the "Twa Dogs" picture was "scant o' cash;" he is better dressed and of sleeker aspect than any other tenant in the room.

No one studying the innumerable illustrated editions of Burns can fail to notice what a lamentable deterioration in the artistic quality of the illustrations set in about the year 1860. Probably the abolition of the duty on paper affords some explanation of this unwelcome phenomenon. Whatever the true explanation may be, it is an undoubted fact that the majority of the drawings to Burns subsequent to that date pall upon one for their commonplace sentiment and crudeness of execution. Prior to that date, however, the now veteran artist, Sir John Gilbert, R.A., prepared a series of designs for an edition of the poet, which for vivacity of spirit and honesty of sentiment still claim generous recognition in any account of Burns in art. Few artists have been so successful in rendering the spontaneity of "To a Mountain Daisy," the eerie feeling of the "Address to the De'il," or the restrained self-appreciation of "The Vision." The venerable painter informs me that he does not remember having extended any of his Burns pictures into oil paintings, an omission which every student of the poet cannot but regret. Such pictures as he proved himself competent to produce would have formed fitting companions for Sir David Wilkie's "Duncan Gray" and "The Cottar's Saturday Night."

Recent years have added remarkably little to the artistic interpretation of Burns. During the last decade, for example, how few pictures finding their *motif* in the poet's verse have appeared on the walls of the Royal Academy. In 1884 there was a "Lover's Quarrel," by Mr Adrian Stokes, to which the following lines were attached:—

"Had we never met and parted,  
We had ne'er been broken-hearted."

Lines, it is to be presumed, intended for this quotation from "Ae Fond Kiss,"

"Never met—or never parted,  
We had ne'er been broken-hearted."

Four years later, that is in 1888, Mr Thomas Faed, R.A., exhibited a "Burns in the Cottage," showing a group of peasants listening with eager faces to a reading from the poet's pages; and in the Academy of 1891 there was a spirited and modern-toned rendering of "Tam o' Shanter," from the brush of Mr Heywood Hardy. One or two pictures may have been overlooked; but supposing the number to be doubled, do half-a-dozen paintings in ten years represent the influence of Burns in the world of art? In reply to a request for a list of such of his pictures as owed their inspiration to Burns, Mr Thomas Faed courteously wrote:—"I fear that I can be of little use to you, for I never really illustrated Burns. He is so mighty that I felt I could not approach him by miles by my art. I therefore looked round for subjects that struck a feeling, an original feeling, however feeble. I have painted a 'Burns and Highland Mary,' also a 'Burns in the Cottage'—a woman reading his glorious verses to her family—but I cannot remember that I ever painted a picture that I could say was an illustration." It is to be feared that few artists have refrained from attempting Burns for Mr Faed's reason—modesty; in all likelihood the majority have been restrained by a reason now and then darkly hinted—a feeling that Burns was beneath their notice. Such artists make the mistake, as Lamb pithily remarked, of "confounding the painting of subjects in common or vulgar life with the being a vulgar artist." The history of art furnishes many examples of how disastrously even great artists have limited the range of their subjects by being indifferent to the claims of literature. They have forgotten the warning of Reynolds that "a painter stands in need of more knowledge than is to be picked off his pallet. He can never be a great artist who is grossly illiterate." Neither does it detract from their fame to owe an inspiration to a poet, for "invention in painting does not imply the invention of the subject, for that is commonly supplied by the poet or historian." Perhaps one reason of the paucity of Burns interpretations may be found in Mr Harry Quilter's assertion that "an awful horror of being thought British seems to have seized upon our artists." It sounds so much finer to declare one's self a cosmopolitan!

Pessimists contend that it is doubtful whether the artists of the present day are as competent to interpret Burns as the artists of fifty years ago, and, as is usually the case, there is a dash of truth in the contention. This fact alone constitutes a weighty impeachment of present-day artistic methods. Whatever unfits an artist to interpret so human a poet as Burns carries its own condemnation. It is not by basking for ever on marble slabs under Grecian skies, or by shedding endless tears over Cleopatra's fate, or by ceaseless exhibitions of the woes of Perseus and Andromeda, that men will learn to live saner and more wholesome lives; and so long as these and kindred topics enthrall our artists they must be powerless to interpret the message of a poet so near to nature as Burns. It is to be hoped that the reign of this unhealthy spirit is near its close, and that ere long the creations of the Ayrshire poet, along with those of his brother-bards, will glide into the studios of our artists and clamour for embodiment. Is it too much to ask that the school of British art shall reflect the school of British literature, as M. Chesneau was under the impression it did? The interpretation of Burns, or of any great poet, is not child's play; it is a task which would make large demands on the powers of the most gifted artist. Burns drew from nature; the result





remains as the product of nature plus the poet's individuality ; but he who illustrates the poem has the difficult task of rendering nature at two removes—he has to encounter and overcome the disturbing quality of the poet's individuality, and of his own personal individuality playing on the previous product. So here is work capable of taxing the profoundest genius. But here is work, too, prepared to the brush of each specialist artist. In the pages of Burns, Mr Briton Riviere, that successor of Landseer, will find dumb brutes as worthy of his genius as any that have played a part in classic story ; Mr W. Q. Orchardson many tragedies of love akin to that perpetuated in his "Alone ;" and Mr Herkomer innumerable texts from which to deduce his sympathy with the hardships of the poor, and his interest in the movement of humanity. The painter who attempts the interpretation of Burns can need no better tutor than Carlyle's penetrating essay on the poet. That will guide him to the poet's sincerity and truth, will show him the ideal within the actual, and breathe upon his canvas the uncontaminated freshness of the mountain air.

H. C. SHELLEY.





## BURNS AND HIGHLAND MARY.

King Cottage, Beith, January 25, 1893.

SIR,—The story of Highland Mary and Burns is getting into a muddle by the gossip and unreliable evidence that has been woven into it. The writers, who are sedulously using all kinds of gossip for some purpose not very apparent if it be not to raise distrust in the verity of Burns, appear to forget that the whole evidence lies in what he has condescended to reveal in his songs and prose notes of explanation to them. The other evidence that has raised a doubt about the information thus furnished is of a frivolous character. The date of the transference of the lair in which the remains of Mary lie proves nothing. She might have been months or even years in the lair previous to the transference for anything that it reveals of her death and burial. But here gossip comes in, and we are told that the custom of Greenock is against the possibility of one being buried in a lair not belonging to her family or relatives. Surely this is verging on the borderland of nonsense. It was, and still is in country places, the wish of Scotch people to have a family lair, but it has to be proved that kindred people refuse, in cases of sudden death, the admittance of the body into their lair before purchasing it. All admit that the death of Mary was sudden, and it is as likely that the purchase of the lair by her relative took place some time after she had been consigned to it as previous to such consignment. To confirm the pre-purchase, Mrs Begg's evidence is brought in to witness the delivery of the letter that informed the poet of her death about eight days after the date of transference. In this case of Burns and Mary these writers note letters passing between them as if the penny post had then existed. In these days the lovers' postmen were the chapmen and the gaberlunzies that traversed the country; and if Burns and Mary corresponded at all it would be by some arrangement of this kind, which would be a tedious way of communication. But Mrs Begg's remembrance was very hazy on the subject, and in reality proved nothing. At the time Scott Douglas came forward with his unsettling paper Dr Robert Chambers was working on his edition of Burns on a new plan. The paper made him reinvestigate the story of Mary, and the result was his adopting the Scott Douglas theory, and shortly after giving his version of the story in *Chambers's Journal* in an article entitled "A Heroine of Burns." Here was first published Mrs Begg's reminiscence of the letter, the date of the transference, and the renovation of the old stone on the lair, and other notices of little value. At that time, 40 years ago, I had commenced to be an enthusiastic student in the life and works of Burns, and my business took me to Greenock once a week, and I was well acquainted with the master builders in this town. On reading Dr Chambers's article I perceived what I considered errors in it, and resolved to point them out to him. One of these errors was the renovation of the old stone on the lair as described in the article; but before writing I went to re-examine the stone, and by a strange coincidence, when near the old graveyard, I met three of the first master builders in Greenock, and with them an architect, all on their way to the same place to examine a tomb, the opening of which for a burial was puzzling some one at the time. Being intimate with the builders I told my business, and asked them for an opinion upon it. After close inspection they all agreed that the stone had not been renovated, that no old surface had been cut down half an inch as described in the article. To this the architect adhered. I wrote to Chambers stating the decision, and in the same letter pointed out the defective evidence in Mrs Begg's reminiscence of Burns receiving the letter as to Mary's death. I had called on Mrs Begg, and found that her memory was very dim upon the subject. She remembered Burns receiving a letter in harvest after they had come in from the field, and this was about all that she remembered. When I pointed out to her that in October—and more, the latter half of it—harvesters did not leave the field until dusk, when it would be an impossibility to read a letter at a window as described, she admitted the correctness of the observation, but said that she had answered Chambers to the best of her recollection, and that he had been so good to her, and at this time was trying to befriend

her daughters, that she did not wish her name to be used against him, as she was sure he would do nothing hurtful to her brother's memory. In my letter I pointed out to Dr Chambers this weakness in Mrs Begg's evidence, and I have reason to believe that it was some remarks that I made in the correspondence that followed that caused him to employ Professor Piazzi Smith to give the time of the sun setting in September and in October at Ellisland on the day he supposed the letter telling Burns of Mary's death was received. He also had a calculation made by the same gentleman of the date of the conjunction of Venus with the sun and its distance in September, the month in which Mrs Burns places the composition of his song "To Mary in Heaven," and on the 21st of October, the date that Chambers supposes the composition of this song took place. In answer to my letter he fully sympathised with the cause of my writing to him, that was the making of the Highland Mary affair episodic to the disruption with the Armours, and that such could only be established on strong and truthful evidence. Of course I had pointed out the weak parts in his evidence, as noted above, and farther, told him to take care, as Burns on this second Sunday in May, 1786, was certainly a married man. He answered this by saying that it would ease my anxiety and change my opinion to know that Burns's letter to Ballantyne, Ayr, informing him of the mutilation of the paper—his private marriage with Jean should have been dated April instead of June, as then published. I mention this to point how obtuse the mind of even a clever man becomes when wrapped up in a hobby. Chambers here infers that the destruction of this paper made Burns a free man. However, he took the opinion of counsel, which changed his opinion. This is given in No. 5 appendix, vol. 2d, edition 1851-2. If the love of Burns and Mary be an episode in the end of spring, 1786, during the disruption by the Armours, as the supporters of this theory affirm, the lovers stand in a dubious position, in which neither truth nor delicacy is found, whatever may be said to the contrary. As mentioned, the whole evidence of this love affair is given by Burns himself, and as to the period of his life his language is explicit. In introducing the song "Highland Mary," he says—"The subject of the song is one of the interesting passages of my youthful days;" and in another place says—"After a pretty long tract of the most ardent affection, &c." Could Burns have used such language of a period of two months or less with any approximation to truth? I think not. One of Scott Douglas's reasons for his theory, if I remember right, is that no other time in the poet's life is found for this love affair. On the contrary, there is the whole time from 1781, when he was jilted by Ellison Beggie, to 1785, when he commenced to pay his addresses to Jean Armour. The period includes his short love passage with Montgomerie's Peggy and his *liaison* with Bess Paton, and a roving attention to others, as Gilbert informs us, and why not Mary among the others? The same says that "he was constantly the victim of some fair enslaver," and that "one generally reigned paramount in his affections," and compares him to Yorick making love to Madam L— at the remise door while under eternal vows to Eliza. It has been attempted to treat these remarks of Gilbert as referring to Burns's loves with Jean Armour and Highland Mary, but let any one read Gilbert's letter carefully and he will see that he refers to a period even before his *liaison* with Bess Paton. The description of the girls, as regarded their position and looks, as related here, makes it almost appear that Gilbert had Highland Mary in his mind's eye when writing. That she was one of the poet's loves at this early period of his life we have his own word for, and nothing at all worthy to disprove it. If it be insisted that the songs are proof of the theory that 1786 was the time referred to in them, it only would come to this, that instead of the love for Mary being episodic to that of Jean it would be that up to the death of Mary Burns's affair with Jean was an episode in his love for Mary. Burns's words quoted above have no ambiguity in them, nor are they in a style that he sometimes indulges in when speaking of what refers to himself, and what Gilbert calls his "too consequential manner." No words could be more explicit than his remarks on his love for







and parting with Mary, and, be it remembered, that it is only through these words that we know of this love affair at all. The changing of the poet's words, as lately done, instead of supporting the views of the party, will raise the indignation of every honest man against them. If their case was strong, there would be no need of altering pronouns to help their views, and the trick is not new. Even Dr Chambers, after all the calculations as to the time of sunset at Ellisland that he got done, changed Mrs Begg's reminiscence into the "end of the season" instead of, as first related by her, a "day in the end of the harvest" and "after their return from the field, &c." The truth is that all the calculations done for him by Professor Smith, if of any value at all, go against the theory that he is attempting to establish. It could easily be shown that there is nothing in his remarks upon the first four lines of "To Mary in heaven" that is hurtful to Mrs Burns's reminiscence of the barnyard incidence and the composition of the song. But as I have drawn out this letter beyond what I intended, I will conclude by again pointing out that the only evidence against Burns's account of the story is the date of the transference of the lair, which is as silent of the death and burial of Mary as the grave; some stupid gossip, and Mrs Begg's recollection of once seeing Burns get a letter and his reading it under circumstances that throws strong suspicion and doubt upon her memory of the transaction.—I am, &c., R. CRAIG.

#### TRANSLATIONS OF BURNS.

Glasgow, January 30, 1893.

SIR,—Your correspondent "Phædo" is over-hasty in assuming that I had fallen into the error of ascribing to Burns the third verse of "Of a' the airts;" there is nothing to warrant the assumption in the article to which he refers. The story of this excremental verse is one of the commonplaces of Burns controversy, and the question of the authorship of the stanza had no bearing on my subject except in so far as the occurrence of the word "clean" in the spurious lines had been adduced as an effective argument against their authenticity through misapprehension on the part of a critic as to its meaning and as to its usage by Burns. In treating of this matter I referred to the Globe edition of the poet's works, where, of course, the added verse is not to be found. "Phædo" says that "Burns never used the word 'clean' in any but the classic sense of reference to perfection in shape." Now this is not the case, unless, indeed, I in turn misunderstand the writer. The word is used by Burns in its ordinary sense several times; it occurs in the third stanza of "The Cotter's Saturday Night"—

"His wec bit ingle, blinkin bonilie,  
His clean hearth-stane."

"Phædo" does not think me justified in taking exception to De Wailly's rendering "Ca' the yowes" by "*appelle les brebis*," and he adds that the translator "had no other word equivalent to 'drive' as it is expressed in the word 'ca'." This assertion is quite incorrect. In "ca' the yowes," *ca'* indubitably means *drive*, whilst De Wailly has mistranslated it *call* as in such a sentence as "Call your dog!" Littré has—"*Appeler son chien: l'appeler de la voix ou en sifflant*." In the case in point "*mène*" is the French equivalent for "*ca'*," the verb *mener* being required to express the sense of "to *ca'*" when speaking of animals, and, as I pointed out, it is properly employed in this sense by De Wailly in his translation of "The Death and Dying Words of Poor Mailie." Littré says (*sub verb. Mener*):—"*En parlant des animaux: les conduire. Mener les bêtes aux champs*." In Italian the cognate word "*menare*" is used in the same sense. "*Menare il bestiame al pascolo: to drive beasts to pasture*." (Baretti, s.v. *Drive*.) I adhere to my opinion that, in this instance, De Wailly was tripped by the word "*ca'*," and I maintain that his translation of "*ca' the yowes*" is inexact.

My comments on the French writer's translation of "new-ca'd" in the stanza beginning

"While new-ca'd kye rowt at the stake,  
An' pownies reek in plough or braik,  
This hour on e'enin's edge I take,"

have not met with the approbation of another correspondent, Mr J. Meikle, who confidently states that the word means "newly calved,"

"neither more nor less," and he expresses surprise how the word could be misunderstood. Nevertheless, the glossarial index to the Globe "Burns"—no mean authority—has "new ca'd, *newly driven*," with a reference to the line just quoted; whilst Paterson's "Burns," edited by W. Scott Douglas—perhaps the finest edition of the poet extant—explains in a foot-note (vol. i., p. 116) that the phrase means "newly-driven kine." As I suggested, De Wailly in all probability stuck to his glossary, for his rendering shows that he did not understand the definition "new-calved" in the sense insisted on by Mr Meikle, as the words "*les vaches qui viennent de vêler*" (*i.e.*, "the cows which have just calved") can refer only to very recent parturition and not to animals known as "new-calved cows" for the first week, or any number of weeks, after calving. The French for the expression used in this latter sense is indicated by Littré in the following quotation from a sixteenth century writer:—"Nul boucher ne pourra vendre . . . vache nouveau vélée." I can assure "Phædo" that I have no desire to disparage De Wailly's work, but "to err is human," and if your correspondent chooses to look for slips, the task will not be so difficult as he seems to imagine. Take, for instance, the well-known lines:—

"There was a lad was born in Kyle,  
But what'n a day, o' what'n a style."

This latter line is translated by De Wailly:—

"Mais dans quel jour ou dans quelle année."

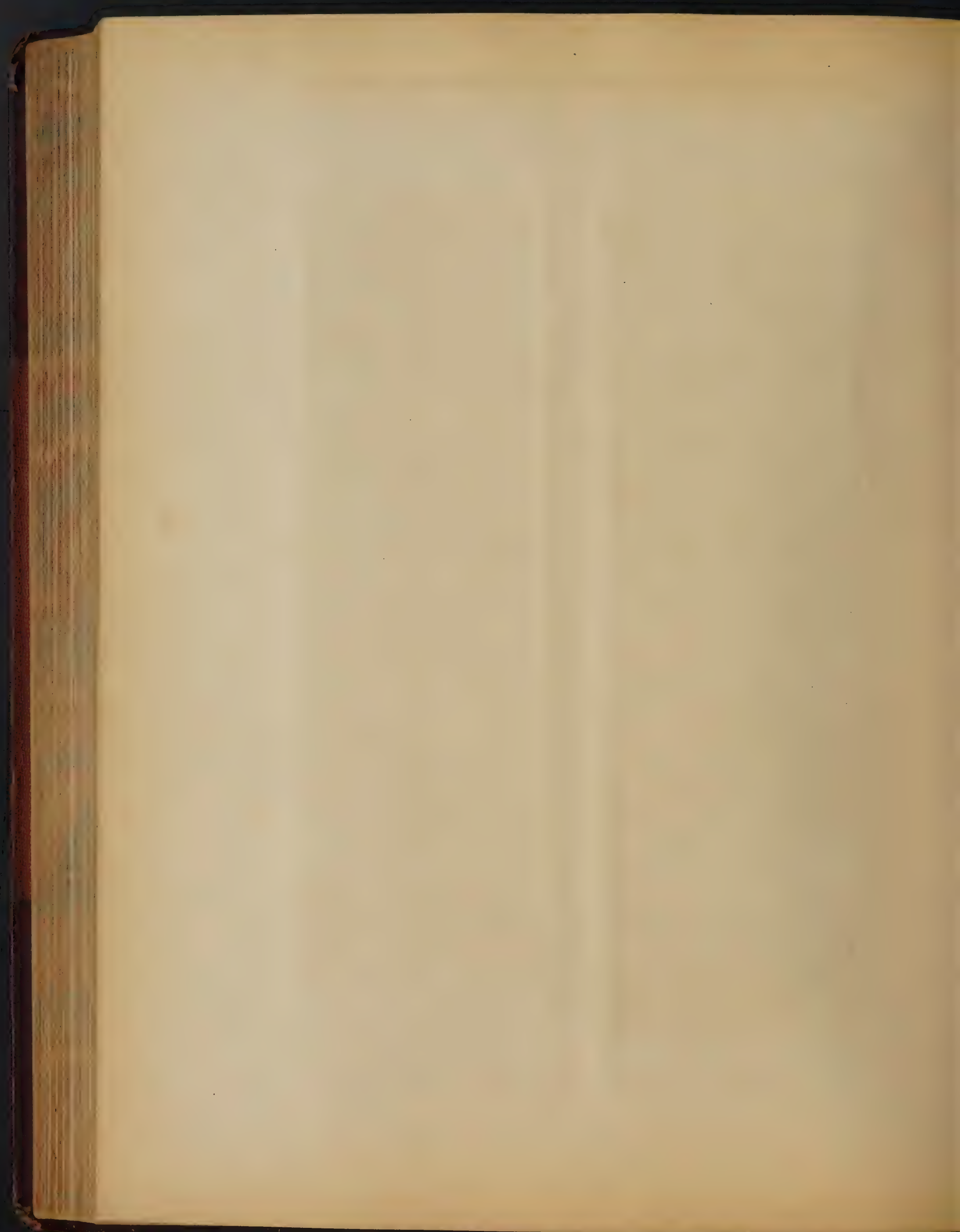
"O' what'n a style" is thus rendered "or of what year!" Now, the change from old to new style took place in this country in 1752, only seven years before the event chronicled in the lines, but the new style had already been adopted in France for more than a century and a half. Is it surprising that this allusion to the confusion of styles existing here, but then unknown in France, should not have been altogether clear to De Wailly? It may also be noted that this translator, being free from the trammels of rhyme and versification, had no occasion whatever to resort to paraphrase.—I am, &c., J. YOUNG.

January 26, 1893.

SIR,—I have been much interested in the article which appeared in your issue of Thursday on "Translations of Burns." My object in penning you a line is to refer to the interpretation of the Scotch word "*ca'*" contained therein. Let me say I always understood that the expression in the first line in the first stanza of "The Second Epistle to Lapraik," "new-ca'd kye," meant newly-calved cows, because I have been quite familiar with the expression being used by country friends who formerly belonged to Ayrshire. Further, I am not altogether convinced by the author's argument regarding "calving being confined to the hour at evening's edge." The expression "new-ca'd kye" often relates to cows calved for a good many days or even weeks, and I think it is by no means an improbable interpretation to give it literally, as cows calved for some time lowing in the evening, for at such a season as the lines were written it is common to give such animals an outing. I allow the interpretation given "newly driven" to be a feasible one. Every Scotchman knows, for instance, such an expression as "*ca' away lads*" or "*ca' canny*," meaning a certain phase of activity. Yet regarding the use of the word as *call*, relating to the ewes, perhaps it is not so very much amiss; and especially when the word *new* precedes it, relating to cows, are we inclined to interpret it in accordance with the expression used by our country friends. I was also going to say that Burns being a farmer would have his mind particularly engrossed with the new-calved state—most farmers are. Also, the same verse states that it was "When pownies reek at plough or braik." If it had been "newly-driven" kye Burns meant, in all probability the time would not agree, as it would have been after the "pownies" were "lowed" that the kye would have been driven out.—I am, &c., TIERREGAN.

#### "NEITHER A LENDER NOR BOTHERER BE."

SIR,—I think I cannot be described as one of these fellows who is always bothering you. This opinion of mine may, of course, be erroneous. You, as an editor, should know how lenient one is





BURNS UP TO (AND BEYOND) DATE.

February 4, 1893.

SIR,—The correspondence which has been evoked by the appearance of Mr Eric Robertson's article on Highland Mary in the *Burns Chronicle* for the present year is very interesting, and can hardly fail, sooner or later, to have important results. As he has not yet replied to my comments, or produced the "evidence" supplementary to his own article, which he alluded to, it would obviously be discourteous to him to discuss in the meantime interpretations placed upon certain of his phrases even by such capable writers as "Geo. Umber."

As for the position of Highland Mary herself in the minds of Scotchmen, so far as that has been affected by Mr Robertson's article and the subsequent discussion, I am well content to refer to such excellent and widely different speeches as those made on the evening of the 25th ult. by Professor Bradley, Mr A. B. Todd, and ex-Provest Goudie, of Ayr.

I wish, however, to refer for a moment to the letter which was published on the 27th ult. from Mr C. E. S. Chambers. No more interesting communication on the subject has yet appeared, and his offer to show some of his grandfather's papers relating to Burns to an editorial committee of specialists is of the first importance. With what he says also on such matters as the so-called "flirtation" of Burns with Miss Alexander and Mr Stevenson's allusion to Jean Armour I heartily agree; but I wish to correct an error into which, perhaps not unnaturally, he has fallen regarding myself. It occurs in a statement which begins, "Robert Chambers (really the poet's greatest biographer), whose information, according to 'W. W.' is 'so easily thrown over.'" I also hold that Robert Chambers is Burns's greatest biographer, and if Mr C. E. S. Chambers will again look at the context to the phrase he quotes he will, I think, see that I mean "easily thrown over," not by critics generally or by myself, but by Mr Robertson, whose style of argumentation in regard to Burns's biography I happened to be illustrating and questioning. What I meant to say was that it will hardly do for Mr Robertson to disregard or "easily throw over" the very circumstantial account Robert Chambers has given of Highland Mary and her Greenock relatives, and then to quietly assume that the same Chambers has proved such things as that Burns had three "love entanglements" in the early part of 1786. All the statements in a biography must be regarded as of equal value. (By the way, Robert Chambers says of the heroine of the third so-called love entanglement, Elizabeth Miller—"She was an amiable girl, had felt kindly towards Burns through all his late distresses, and had thus raised a kind of love, chiefly composed of gratitude, in his bosom.")

May I venture to suggest that your various correspondents—"Escube," "Geo. Umber," and that sprightly humorist "G. Linwood," who may find one of these days that the proposed committee of specialists will have comparatively little trouble in dealing with Burns's love affairs—should cease from controversy, and take steps for the appointment of a body in the shape of such an Editorial Committee that in the long run would render controversy impossible? By all means let us, each in his own way, make our marks in Burns literature. But let us not waste time by making marks, or even remarks, on each other. Can some of the leading Burns Clubs, such as Greenock, Kilmarnock, Ayr, and Edinburgh, not concert some action in regard to this matter?—I am, &c.,  
W. W.

A REVOLUTIONARY SONG BY BURNS.

Kilmaurs, February 4, 1893.

SIR,—The song referred to by your correspondent "J. B. G." was first printed in Cunningham's edition as a production of Burns. This editor is, however, so unreliable in the matter of authorship that very little weight attaches to its appearance there. In form and sentiment it is akin to the "Tree of Liberty," first published by Chambers in 1838, and which will be found in "Whistle Binkie," with an explanatory note. I have not seen it positively stated that either of these pieces was printed from Burns's MSS., but even were that assertion made, it would require to be further shown that they were not transcripts from fugitive periodicals of the time, as is the case with many other productions erroneously ascribed to Burns on the strength of their being found in his handwriting. The best modern authorities reject both as compositions of the national bard.—I am, &c.,  
D. M'NAUGHT.

Glasgow, February 4, 1893.

SIR,—In reply to "J. B. G.'s" query regarding the authenticity of the song from which he quotes, I think the best answer to it is to quote Mr Scott Douglas's note concerning it in the "Kilmarnock Edition" of Burns's poems. He says—"We overlooked this while giving the group of Burns's pieces first collected by Cunningham. Chambers, in his edition of 1838, introduces it in a foot-note thus—"Burns unquestionably felt as a zealous partisan of the French Revolution. That such was the case, his 'Tree of Liberty,' his 'Vision,' and 'Inscription for an Altar of Independence,' are sufficient proof, and more may be found in some specimens of an unpublished poem given by Mr. Cunningham—"Why should we idly waste our prime," &c." "The present editor has little doubt that this production, and also the 'Tree of Liberty,' if really taken from Burns's MS., have been merely transcribed by him from the pages of some wild magazine of the period."

I am not a Burns bibliographer, but I hope this will be of some use to "J. B. G."—I am, &c.,  
J. F.

King Cottage, Beith, February 4, 1893.

SIR,—"A Song of the Revolution" is the correct title of the Revolutionary song that "J. B. G." asks about in to-day's *Herald*. It is not by Burns, although found in different editions of his poems, but generally given as not by him. It is a translation of a song, or parts of more songs than one, sung on the streets of Paris in the Revolution. It was found among the papers of Mr Thomas Hardy, who, with eleven others, was tried for high treason at the Old Bailey in 1794. Allan Cunningham published it as by Burns in his edition of Burns, 1834. Since then it has found its way into various editions of Burns.—I am, &c.,  
R. CRAIG.

TRANSLATIONS OF BURNS.

SIR,—I have resided much in Ayrshire and other counties, and am quite familiar with the expression "new ca'd," and the meaning always meant by these using the phrase was invariably "newly calved." "Recently driven home," for all that, doesn't seem a strained interpretation. I am old enough to have seen Walter Scott and James Hogg at Ayr races once—for I was born in 1809.





EDINBURGH, WEDNESDAY, February 8, 1893.

SUMMARY OF TO-DAY'S NEWS.

AN action came up in the Small Debt Court to-day in which a gentleman sued Mr Stillie for the price of certain forged M.SS., sold to him by the defender as genuine.

THE case was continued pending the more important case, Kennedy v. Stillie.

THE BURNS MSS.

ACTION AGAINST MR STILLIE.

AN action was raised to-day in Edinburgh Sheriff Small Debt Court by Mr John Macdonald, 3A North St David Street, Edinburgh, against Mr James Stillie, bookseller, 19 George Street, Edinburgh, to recover £11 which he paid to Mr Stillie for what he says were represented to be genuine Burns and other manuscripts, and which he now declares to be spurious. The claim shows the date of sale to be 18th August 1890, and is as follows:—

To sum paid you for a Robert Burns' "Auld Rob Morris," £5; and on other side of same sheet of manuscript, "Poorth Caud," £5; to commission signed by Prince Charles Edward Stewart, as Prince-Regent, to Colonel W. H. Sandilands, £3—£11.

On the case being called to-day, Mr Craigie, advocate, who appeared for the defender, said he thought that the case ought to be sisted in the meantime, and for this reason. His Lordship might be aware that there was now an action raised by Mr Kennedy, concerning a number of documents which are alleged by Mr Kennedy to have been sold to him as genuine, and that allegation Mr Stillie denies. Now, if he understood it, the claim put forward by Mr Macdonald is on similar ground. He understood that the pursuer said, though his claim was far from being definite, that he bought some Robert Burns' manuscripts on the representation of Mr Stillie that they were genuine. Of course Mr Stillie denied that the documents were forgeries and that he made a representation that they were genuine. If this case were to be gone into thoroughly, they would require a great many experts from London and elsewhere to speak as to the genuineness or otherwise of the documents. It would, therefore, in these circumstances be infinitely better that the case be delayed till the case by Mr Kennedy was proved and the result seen. If it should be necessary to bring down experts, it would be better that the proof should take place at about the same time as the Kennedy action in the Court of Session. The Pursuer—Where does he intend to bring down experts from—not from aloft (extending his arm over his head.) Mr Stillie sells to me a paper purporting to be a manuscript written by Burns, and I ask him to docket the thing and he does so. My position is infinitely better than Mr Kennedy's. I have nothing to do with Mr Kennedy at all. Here is Mr Stillie's receipt for the article and the Burns' manuscript (extending them towards defender's counsel.)

Mr Craigie—Of course, I am not an expert, and cannot say.

Mr Macdonald—No, I don't suppose you are. You may look upon the cover also.

Sheriff Hamilton—How do you intend to prove that these are not genuine documents?

Mr Macdonald (apparently misunderstanding the question)—Not at all; neither the paper nor anything else is genuine. I did not send them to the British Museum to ask those experts to identify Burns' writing when there are so many Scotsmen down here to do it.

Sheriff—Are you going to bring experts down here?

Pursuer—Mr Hew Morrison brought them down here. The MSS. are downright forgeries.

Sheriff—I don't suppose that is admitted?

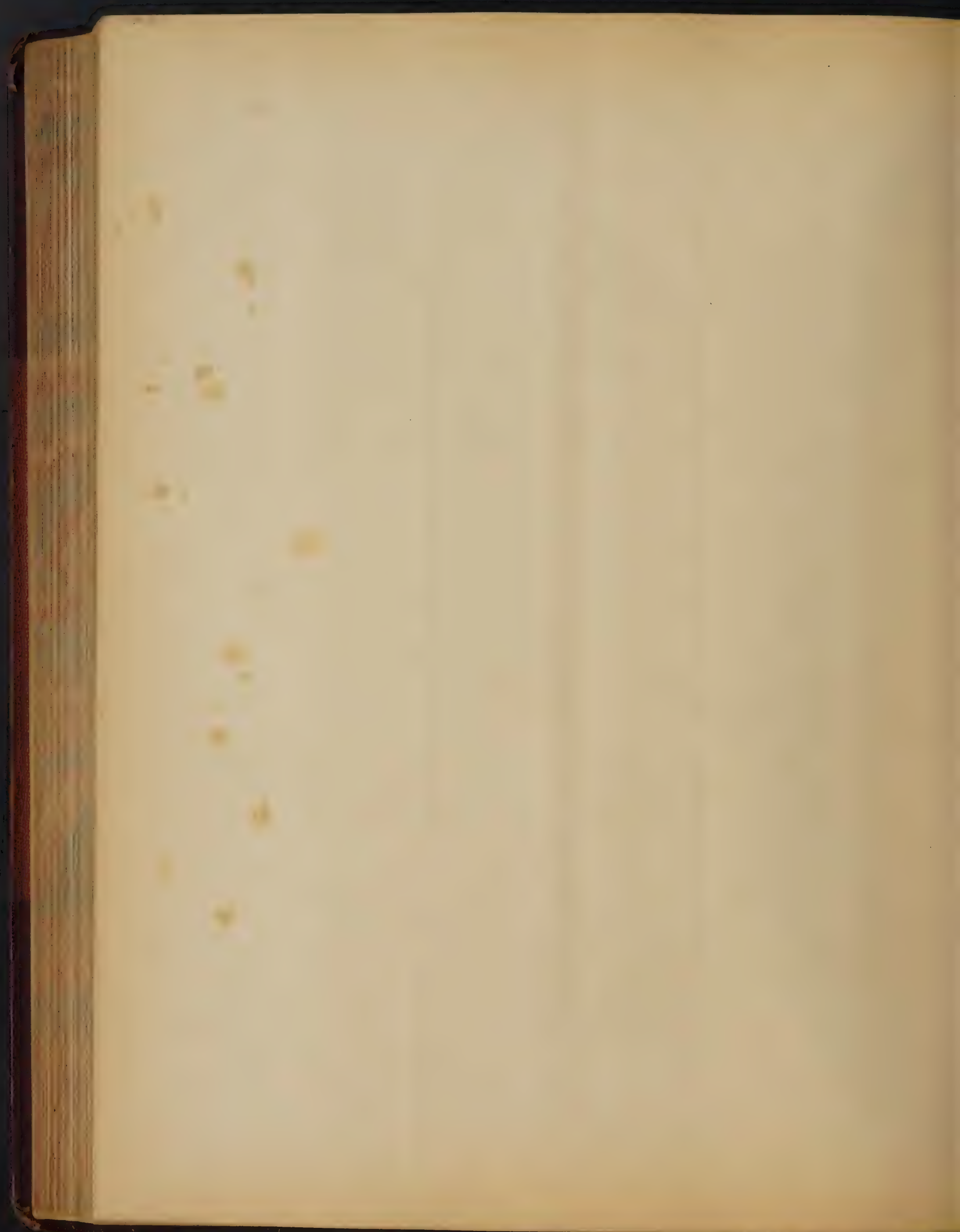
Mr Craigie—No; that is not admitted.

Sheriff to pursuer—It would be better to have an agent. Have you got an agent? (It was here explained that the pursuer's agent was unavoidably absent, and a request made that the case should therefore be continued. When is this case of Kennedy's likely to come on?)

Mr M'Donald asked the Sheriff to look at the receipt and also the documents. The thing is simple as daylight. There is a thing purporting to be a Burns' manuscript and a receipt for it.

Sheriff Hamilton—I continue the case for a week on the footing that you confess with the defender's agent as to whether it is to be continued generally or anything done this day week.

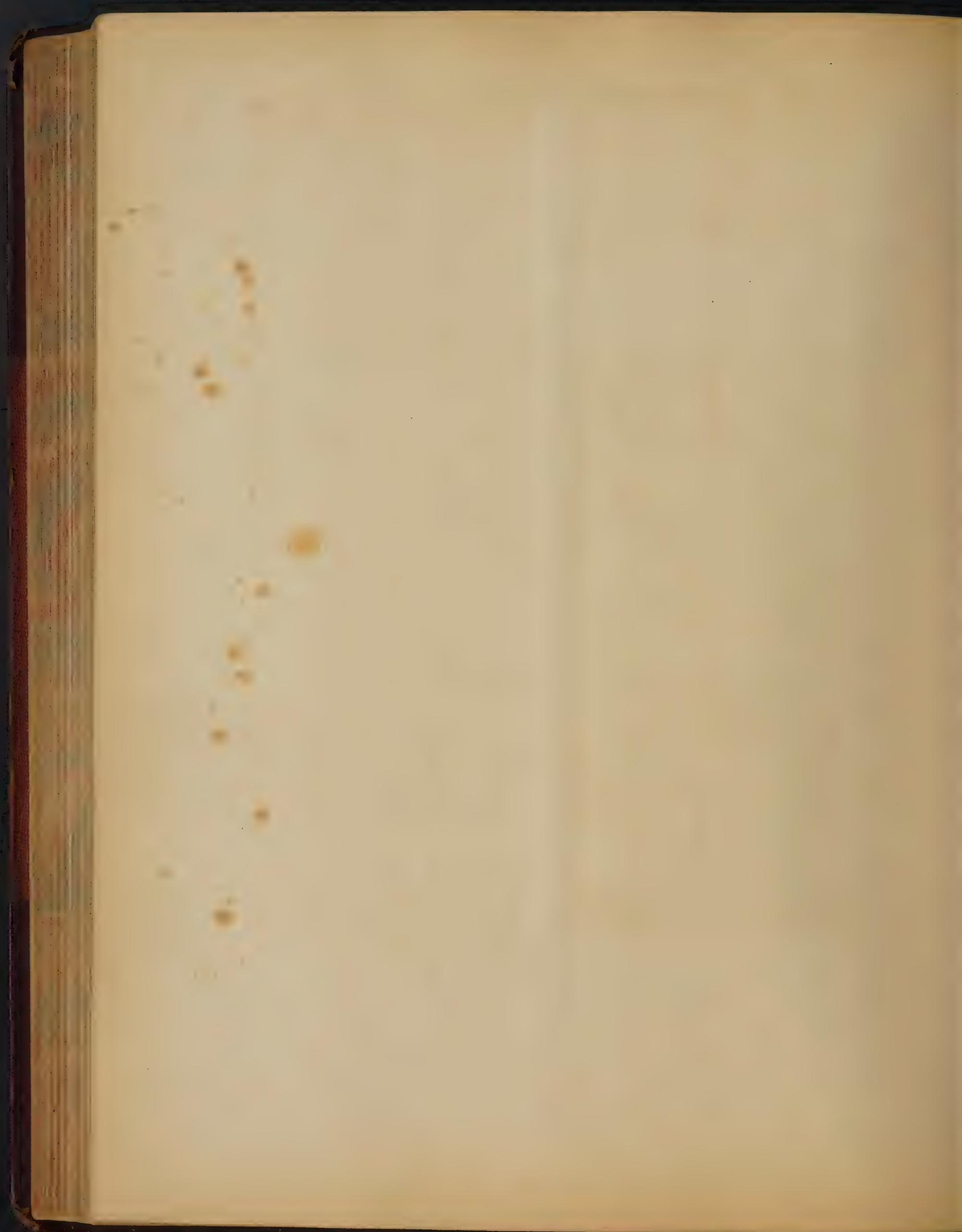
The parties then left the bar. Mr Macdonald saying something as to the Jacobite manuscript being about as genuine as the other one.





THE FORGERIES OF BURNS.

In our last number we expressed ourselves very strongly about the sale of the forged letters of Burns. We did not know that a journalistic enquiry was then taking place in an Edinburgh newspaper upon "the authenticity of a mass of old manuscripts, chiefly purporting to be relics of Burns, Scott, and the Jacobite times, which has within the last few years been placed upon the market with amazing prodigality." As the readers of *The Archivist* well know, we have repeatedly warned them against purchasing these forged documents, and from the large correspondence we have received upon the subject, our warnings have not been given in vain, for we have saved many from being victimised in consequence of our advice. It has been through the unwearied vigilance, and untiring energy of Mr. Cratie Angus of Glasgow, and Mr. Colvill Scott of London, that the truth has at last been brought to light. The question of the genuineness of these documents was first publicly raised in Scotland last August, in the columns of the *Glasgow Express* by the aforesaid gentlemen, Messrs. Angus and Scott. The controversy which then took place was afterwards transferred to the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, and Mr. Reach, the Editor of the latter paper, is to be complimented for the admirable way in which, day by day the imposture was gradually exposed. Forgers, as a rule, are mere copyists, they cannot coin anythings out of their own brains, they can only imitate the *hand* of the authors they counterfeit, and therefore they copy old letters, old poems, etc. In these forgeries, poems were attributed to Burns, which were written ten years before he was born, and others were but mere transcripts of Verses from old Magazines. Two persons have already been arrested on a magistrate's warrant, charged with "uttering as genuine forged documents." When the time comes for the story of these orgeries to be written, it will undoubtedly form another chapter in the "History of Human Folly," which Porson said would take up 500 volumes.





## Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.

EDINBURGH, THURSDAY, June 15, 1893.

ALEXANDER HOWLAND SMITH pleaded not guilty in the Sheriff Court to-day in answer to the charge of fabricating and selling ancient MSS.

SEVERAL objections were taken to the relevancy of the indictment.

### "ANTIQUÉ" SMITH'S CASE.

Alexander Howland Smith, better known as "Antiqué" Smith, was brought up at a pleading diet of the Edinburgh Sheriff Criminal Court to-day—before Sheriff Principal Blair—on a charge connected with the forgery of Burns and other MSS. On entering the dock the accused seemed a little nervous and excited, but soon regained his composure. Mr Dewar, advocate, instructed by Mr D. Turner, solicitor, appeared on behalf of the accused. The indictment—with a copy of which the accused had been served, and which was not read in Court, charged the accused that he "having formed a fraudulent scheme obtaining money from others by fabricating manuscripts or other documents of apparent historic or literary interest, and disposing of these as genuine to parties who might purchase the same from you or take them in pledge, you did in pursuance of the said scheme (1) at the times set forth in the Inventory annexed, in the shop, 15 Bristo Place, Edinburgh, occupied by Andrew Brown, bookseller, pretend to him that the 53 manuscripts or other documents forming Nos. 1 to 53, both inclusive, of the documents specified in said Inventory were genuine and what they purported to be, and that you had obtained the same in the law office of the late Mr Ferrier, writer to the signet, by whom you had been employed, as a clerk, and did thus induce him to purchase the same to pay to you various sums of money as the price thereof, the particular sums being to the Prosecutor unknown, you knowing the said manuscripts or other documents to be false and to have been fabricated by you, and you did appropriate the said sums to your own use; (2) on the dates set forth in the schedule No. 1 in the premises in Milne's Square, Edinburgh, occupied by the Equitable Loan Company of Scotland pawnbrokers, there pretend to George Tait, manager of the said company, that the 32 manuscripts or other documents forming numbers 54, to 85, both inclusive, and the documents specified in said inventory were genuine, and what they purported to be and that the same had been bequeathed to you by your uncle, the late Mr Ferrier, who was a lawyer, or that you did obtain them in his office, and did thus induce him to take the same in pledge and to advance to you on the security of the same and of certain other documents and books pledged by you with him at the same time the sums specified in the said schedule No. 1, you knowing the said manuscripts or other documents to be false and to have been fabricated by you, and you appropriate the said sums as far as applicable to the said 32 manuscripts or other documents to your own use, (3), on the dates set forth in the schedule No. 2

within the premises 98 Rose Street, Edinburgh, occupied by James Williamson & Sons, Pawnbrokers, pretend to James Williamson, a partner of the said firm, that the ten manuscripts or other documents forming Nos. 86 to 95, both inclusive, of the documents specified on said inventory were genuine and what they purported to be and that, you did purchase the same at different auction sales and did thus induce him to the same in pledge and accordance to you on the security of the same, and of two other documents pledged by you with him at the same time, the sums specified in the said schedule No. 2, you knowing the said manuscripts or other documents to be false and to have been fabricated by you, and you did appropriate the said sums so far as applicable to the said ten manuscripts or other documents to your own use; and (4) on the dates set forth in the schedule No. 3, in the premises 35 South Bridge, Edinburgh, occupied by James Millan, pawnbroker, pretended to him that the three manuscripts or other documents forming 96, 97, and 98 of the documents specified in the said inventory were genuine and what they purported to be, and that you had obtained them from a deceased relative who had been a collector of manuscripts and did thus induce him to take the same in pledge, and advance to you thereon the sums specified in the said schedule you knowing the said manuscripts or other documents to be false and to have been fabricated by you, and you did appropriate the said sums to your own use."

In answer to the Sheriff, Smith replied that he was not guilty.

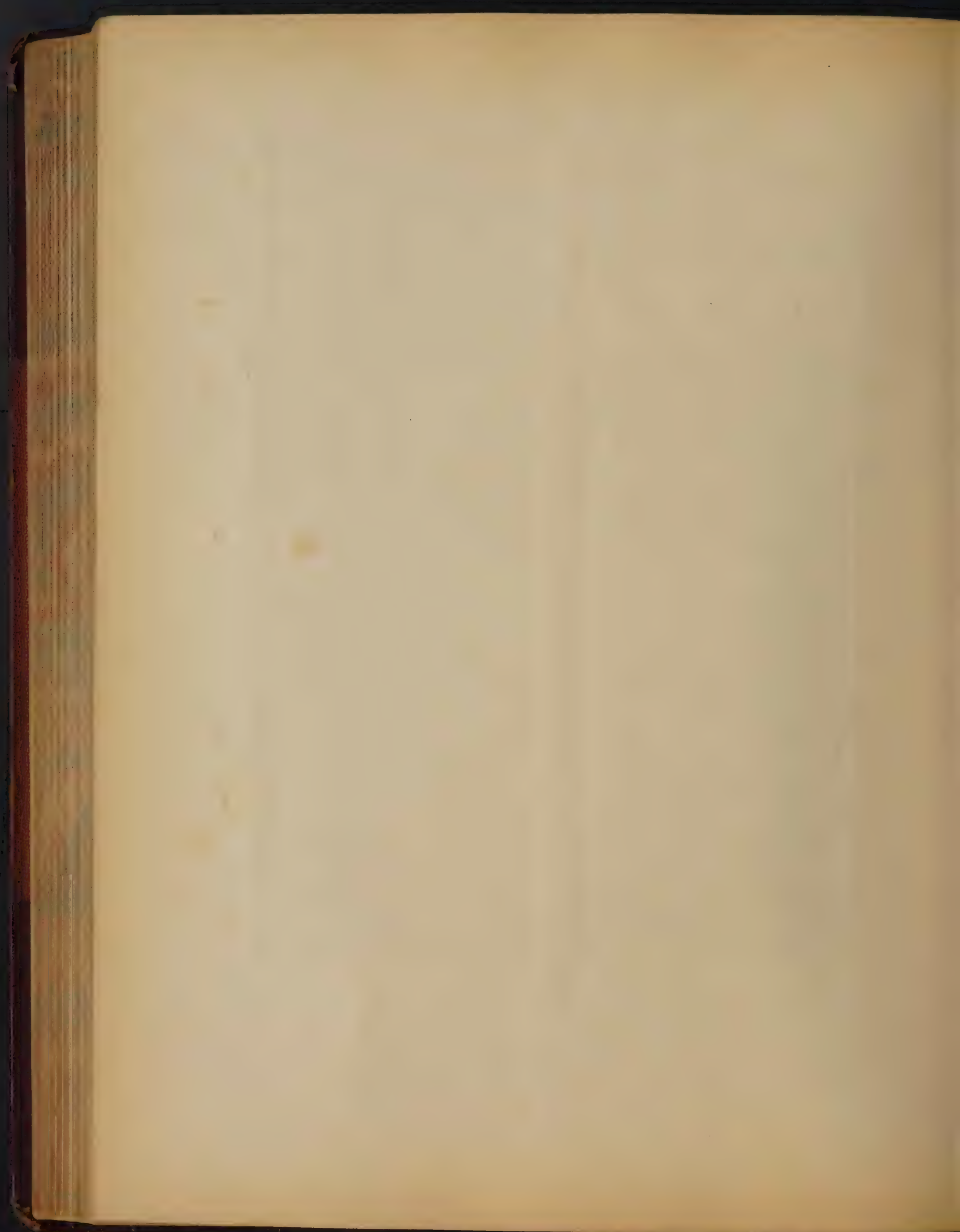
Mr Dewar, on behalf of the accused, then intimated that he had to state, in terms of the Procedure Act, 1887, objections to the relevancy of the indictment. The principal objection he took on the first count is that, when charged with selling these manuscripts and receiving for them sums of money, the particular sums of money are not specified.

His Lordship—In short, that the first charge is defective in respect it does not state the amount received by the accused.

Counsel—Yes. Proceeding, Mr Dewar further objected to that charge in respect that the sums received were not in excess of the value of the documents delivered. If they were not in excess of the value of the documents, he added, there was no crime. To the second charge he objected that it was not said that the security given to the pawnbroker was inadequate, and it was not averred that the accused did not intend to repay the money advanced on the security of the said documents. To the third charge the objection read:—It being averred that he pledged two sets of documents together, one being admittedly good and the other alleged to be bad, the accused is entitled to know the value of the admittedly good securities advances which are not alleged to have been obtained by means of the fraudulent scheme libelled. To the fourth charge it was also objected that it was not alleged that the security was not inadequate. Counsel also lodged a general objection under clause 43 of the Criminal Procedure Act 1887, for the prevention of late trials, in respect that the Public Prosecutor should show cause why the accused was not brought to trial within 110 days from the date of commitment.

Sheriff Blair intimated that the objections and other questions would be disposed of by the High Court on the 26th June when the accused would be brought to trial.

It may be stated that the list of witnesses and productions in the case is a very large one. There are no fewer than 162 productions in the case, about 100 being documents, and the witnesses number no fewer than forty-seven. The schedules appended to the indictment shows that the sum paid by the Equitable Loan Company was £24, 2s., by Williamson & Sons, £6, and by James Mullan 15s.





## TRIAL OF "ANTIQUE" SMITH.

AFTER a delay of many weeks the trial of Alexander Howland Smith on a charge of fabricating manuscripts, arising out of disclosures in the *Evening Dispatch*, commenced this morning in the High Court of Justiciary. At the commencement of the proceedings the attendance of the public was small, but as the day wore on the seats in the Court rapidly filled up. The presiding Judge was the Lord Justice-Clerk, and the prosecuting counsel were Mr Strachan and Mr J. A. Reid, advocate-depute. A small case for sentence was taken first, and then the diet against Smith was called. The accused, who had been out on bail, occupied a seat on the right of the well of the Court, but on the case being called he entered the prisoner's dock and sat between two constables. He was defended by Mr Dewar and Mr Grainger Stewart, instructed by Mr Daniel Turner, L.A.

## THE INDICTMENT.

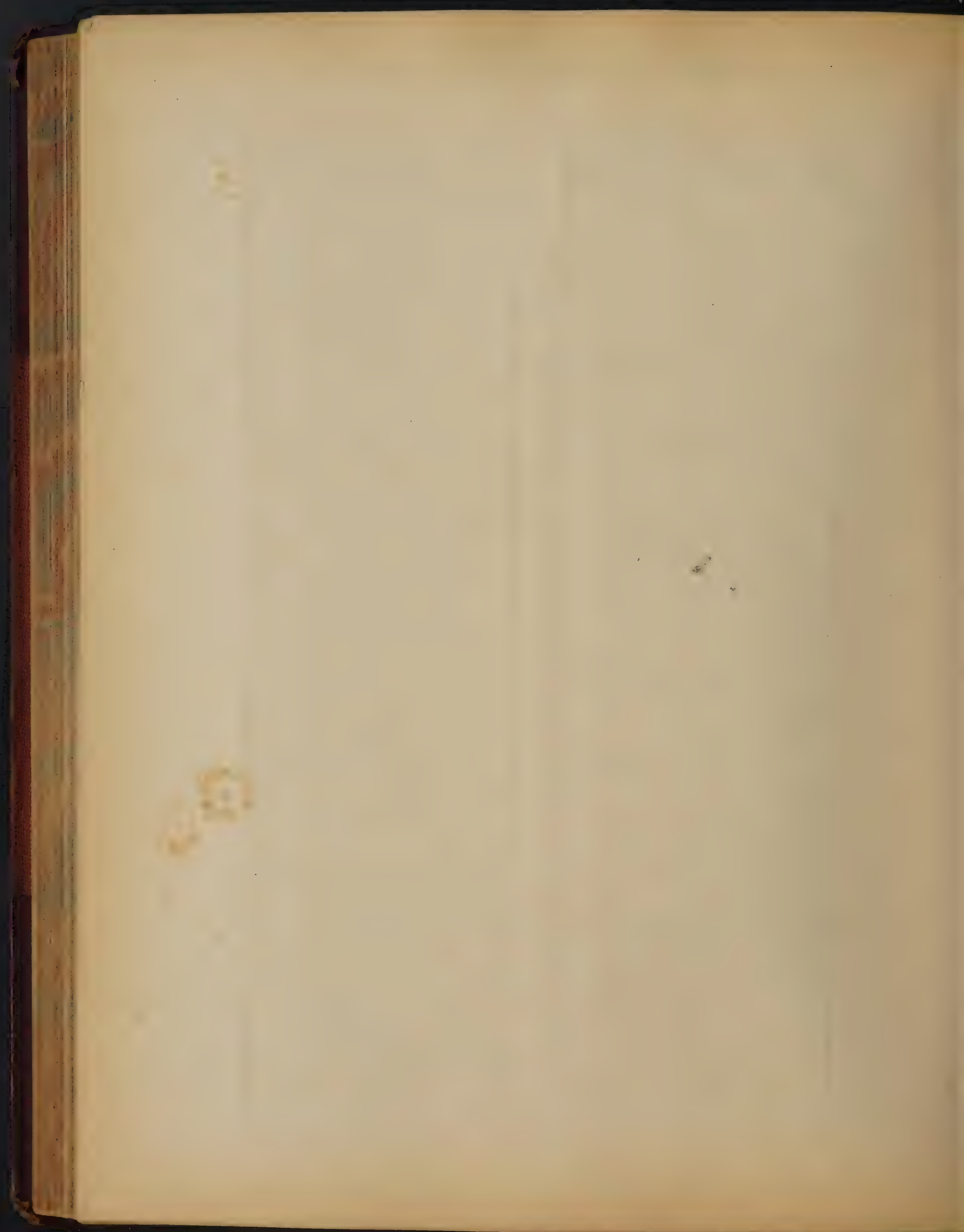
The indictment charged the accused that he "having formed a fraudulent scheme of obtaining money from others by fabricating manuscripts or other documents of apparent historic or literary interest, and disposing of these as genuine to parties who might purchase the same from you, or take them in pledge, you did in pursuance of the said scheme (1) at the times set forth in the inventory annexed, in the shop 15 Bristo Place, Edinburgh, occupied by Andrew Brown, bookseller, pretend to him that the 53 manuscripts or other documents forming Nos. 1 to 53, both inclusive, of the documents specified in said inventory were genuine and what they purported to be, and that you had obtained the same in the law office of the late Mr Ferrier, Writer to the Signet, by whom you had been employed as a clerk, and did thus induce him to purchase the same, and pay to you various sums of money as the prices thereof, the particular sums being to the Prosecutor unknown, you knowing the said manuscripts or other documents to be false and to have been fabricated by you, and you did appropriate the said sums to your own use; (2) on the dates set forth in the schedule No. 1, in the premises in Milne's Square, Edinburgh, occupied by the Equitable Loan Company of Scotland, pawnbrokers there, pretend to George Tait, manager of the said Company, that the 32 manuscripts or other documents forming numbers 54 to 85, both inclusive, of the documents specified in said inventory were genuine and what they purported to be, and that the same had been bequeathed to you by your uncle, the late Mr Ferrier, who was a lawyer, or that you did obtain them in his office, and did thus induce him to take the same in pledge and to advance to you, on the security of the same and of certain other documents and books pledged by you with him at the same time the sums specified in the said schedule No. 1, you knowing the said manuscripts or other documents to be false and to have been fabricated by you, and you did appropriate the said sums as far as applicable to the said thirty-two manuscripts or other documents, to your own use; (3) on the dates set forth in the schedule No. 2 within the premises 98 Rose Street, Edinburgh, occupied by James Williamson & Sons, pawnbrokers, pretend to James Williamson, a partner of the said firm, that the ten manuscripts or other documents forming Nos. 86 to 95, both inclusive, of the documents specified on said inventory were genuine and what they purported to be, and that you did purchase the same at different auction sales, and did thus induce him to take the same in pledge and advance to you, on the security of the same and of two other documents pledged by you with him at the same time, the sums specified in the said schedule No. 2, you knowing the said manuscripts or other documents to be false and to have been fabricated by you, and you did appropriate the said sums, so far as applicable to the said ten manuscripts or other documents to your own use; and (4) on the dates set forth in the schedule No. 3, in the premises 35 South Bridge, Edinburgh, occupied by James Mullan, pawnbroker, pretend to him that the three manuscripts or other documents forming 96, 97, and 98 of the documents specified in the said inventory were genuine and what they purported to be, and that you had obtained them from a deceased relative, who had been a collector of manuscripts, and did thus induce him to take the same in pledge, and advance to you thereon the sums specified in the said schedule, you knowing the said manuscripts or other documents to be false and to have been fabricated by you, and you did appropriate the said sums to your own use."

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## OBJECTIONS TO THE RELEVANCY.

Mr Grainger Stewart who, instructed by Mr Daniel Turner, solicitor, appeared for the accused, stated a number of objections to the relevancy of the indictment. To the first count of the charge he raised the objection that while the accused was charged with selling certain documents and receiving for them sums of money, the particular sums so received were not specified. That money not being stated, the first charge was, he contended, perfectly irrelevant. There was absolutely no crime in fabricating documents; only when there was money passed on them was there a crime. It was unfair to the prisoner that he should have to defend himself from a charge so general as the first count of the indictment was. In regard to the same charge and to the others, Mr Grainger Stewart also took objection on the ground that it was not averred that the sums received by the accused were in excess of the value of the documents in question. There ought to have been some specification that more money was given for the documents than they were really worth. Whatever the documents were they were of some value, and if the accused received no more than their value there was no crime. To the second charge it was objected that the indictment did not state whether or not there was sufficient security given for the money advanced by the pawnbrokers. If the security given was sufficient, then there was no crime; if, on the other hand, it was alleged that the security was insufficient, then the accused was entitled to know to what extent it was said to be insufficient, so that he might meet the statement. Further, this part of the indictment was objected to on the ground that it was not alleged that the accused did not mean to repay the money received on the security of the documents put in pledge. It was necessary to the indictment to have it stated that the accused did not intend to repay the money advanced. As to the third count of the indictment, the objection was that it was not specified what sums were received on the good documents and what sums were received on the fabricated documents alleged to have been pledged by accused. They were entitled to know from the Prosecutor what the value of these good documents was before they were in a position properly to meet the charge. To the fourth charge, the objection previously stated—that it was not alleged that the security was inadequate—was put forward.

Mr Strachan, in reply, said that with regard to the first objection, which was that the specific sums alleged to have been given to the accused were not mentioned, he had to point out that the prisoner was said to have tendered certain documents which he represented to be genuine. The crime consisted in obtaining the money on false and fraudulent representations, and the statement in the indictment was quite specific. The prisoner had represented these things to be genuine, and on that representation the goods were purchased and the money was paid. That, Mr Strachan submitted, was a crime in itself, and it was not necessary to specify the amount received and the objection was not well founded. In the second place, it was said that no more than the value of these things had been given although they might have been false. Any objection of that kind was excluded by the fact that the documents were represented to be genuine. That was quite sufficient in itself. With regard to the pawnbrokers, it was said that the indictment did not set forth that he did not intend to repay the money he had received. That, Mr Strachan said, appeared to be perfectly immaterial, because if the prisoner gave documents of no value on the representation that they were genuine, then the very moment they were delivered a fraud was committed. They could not specify what particular sums were given applicable to the particular items, and it was stated that the genuineness of these documents formed part of the essence of the transaction; that it was upon that footing that the pawnbrokers proceeded. Everything possible had been done to state a relevant case, and there was a distinct averment that the documents were false and that they were represented to be genuine.





Mr Dewar replied on behalf of the prisoner.

The Lord Justice-Clerk said he had some difficulty with regard to the first objection, which related to the first charge. The objection was that no particular sums of money were mentioned as having been received for the different documents included in that part of the indictment. It seemed strange that it was not possible to specify the sums; but if at the trial it appeared that the Prosecutor did know or ought to have known the particular sums, it would be quite impossible for him to obtain a conviction under that head of the indictment. In the meantime the objection would be repelled. As regarded the general objection to all the charges that it was not averred that the documents were not of the value given for them, he had no difficulty in repelling it. If a person fabricated documents and sold them for a price on the allegation and representation that they were genuine, that undoubtedly was a crime, because the price was obtained by fraud. Then it was said that it was not averred in the case of charges relating to the pawning that the prisoner did not intend to repay the sums obtained from the pawnbroker. It was not necessary to make any such statement, because the fraud consisted in obtaining possession of the money by passing off as genuine documents which were fabricated, and it was immaterial whether there was or was not any intention to pay back the money. The last objection was that in the second and third charges it was not specified what was the value of the genuine as distinguished from the fabricated documents in the bundles pledged with the pawnbroker. Then, again, if the Prosecutor did not know the specific sums applicable to good and bad documents, he was not bound to state them, or the grounds of his want of knowledge; but if at the trial it turned out that he knew or ought to have known the particular sums it would be matter for direction to the jury whether they could convict in the circumstances. All the objections were, therefore, repelled.

The prisoner was then asked to plead. He pleaded not guilty, and a jury being empanelled, the case went to trial.

#### THE EVIDENCE FOR THE PROSECUTION.

The first witness called for the prosecution was

Andrew Brown, bookseller, 15 Bristo Place, Edinburgh, who, in reply to Mr Strachan, said he first became acquainted with Smith, the accused, about the latter end of 1886. At that time Smith came into his shop offering for sale, he thought, a book with some cuttings—autographs—in it. He bought that book from Smith, and sold it there and then to a customer. A month or two afterwards accused came back to witness' shop and offered for sale two documents—he thought an "Earl of Mar" and a "Duke of Argyll" letter. Smith told him he had obtained the documents at the office of a Mr Ferrier, W.S., who was removing his chambers at the time. Accused's statement was that he had been told to clear the documents away as so much waste, and that Mr Ferrier had given him the documents in question and others. Q.—Did you believe that story? A.—It was quite a feasible story. Q.—And you purchased the two documents you have mentioned? A.—I did purchase them after that story. That story led me to purchase them. Witness, continuing, stated that he had gone, without saying anything to Smith, to Mr Ferrier's house at Athol Crescent, and had shown him the two documents, at the same time telling him Smith's story. Mr Ferrier, who was very ill at the time, asked him whether the documents were of any value, and witness had replied that from an antiquarian point of view they were. Mr Ferrier said that they were of little legal value, and added that there were a lot of "such things" in his office. Subsequently witness had received a letter from Mr Ferrier, in which he had said that he did not know where Smith had ferretted out "the other autographs," but that he might find it difficult to identify them, and should leave them alone. After that witness had called again on Mr Ferrier and had purchased some documents from him—one of these a sort of journal of the affairs of Scotland about 1600, all in MS. Still later he had called again at Mr Ferrier's, but had found that in the interval he had died. After that accused had come to him with MSS. requesting him to purchase them. These he had bought. Q.—Did you buy many from him at that time? A.—Not very many at the beginning, because Mr Smith said he had only a few. Q.—And

after that? A.—I bought them just as it suited me—just as I thought I could sell them. At first, witness continued, he did not have a very good sale for the documents but they seemed to be run on afterwards. The dealings between him and Smith began in 1886 and continued (with an interruption of two years during which Smith was in Glasgow) up to 1892. He sold a number of these documents to Mr Buchanan, Clarinish House, Row, Dumbartonshire, who was brought to his shop by Mr Macpherson. Mr Buchanan wanted to know where the letters came from, and witness received a letter from Smith, dated 8th April 1887.

Mr Crole read the letter referred to, in which Smith stated that the writs were obtained and collected by him in 1882 from what was considered the waste of a lawyer's office—a W.S.—in Edinburgh, whose business was, so far as he knew, the oldest in Edinburgh, the business books running back to the middle of the seventeenth century. The documents were picked with many others from the contents of old charter boxes and from cellars in the office where they had accumulated. Many of the families had long ceased to exist, and the documents were looked upon as so much nuisance and rubbish, and it was a question between the scavenger, the waste-paper merchant, and the writer as to what was kept and what was destroyed. With the consent of the owner he chose as many of the deeds as he wished as curiosities, and the remainder were carried away by the scavenger and Adcock, the waste-paper man, for general destruction. On the face of the papers themselves it would be seen that they never could have been Government property, as they related wholly to third persons who must have been more than anxious that their misdeeds should be overlooked by the Government. The documents, the letter proceeded, "belong to no one but myself, are and were my own property, and you need have no fear in disposing of them in any way you think proper consistent with a fair price. Now, these letters must stand on their own merits, because I am not able to say anything about their history from the time of their leaving the original holders of them. Numbers of them were detached from their proper bundles. The whole basement of the building where they were was one conglomeration of parchments, forming the damp of over a century, a sheet more than three feet thick. The scavenger had in more than one instance to use a pick to dig them out. I have no reason to doubt their genuineness in any way, and, so far as I am concerned, I can guarantee to you their genuineness in every way."

Witness, in reply to Mr Strachan, said that he gave that letter to Mr Buchanan, who offered £50 for the documents. He sold some of the documents to Mr Bryce, searcher of records, in 1887 or 1888, and to Mr Mackenzie, Rillbank Terrace, in 1890. He got the documents from Smith about 1887. He sold them all except some he retained which were of no money value. Those he identified in Court, being numbers 39 to 53 in the libel. Nos. 1 to 22 were the set he sold to Mr Buchanan, Nos. 23 to 31 he sold to Mr Bryce, and Nos. 32 to 38 he sold to Mr Mackenzie. He had no record of the different documents he got from Smith. He always paid him money on the footing that the documents were genuine. Smith seemed always to be needing money. He kept no note of the money. The sums varied. He got other documents from the accused. He heard many stories of them. Some said they were wrong, some that they were right and some that they belonged to other people. To test the matter he had a sale at Chapman's. Mr McGill, the Duke of Argyll's agent, claimed five or six of the documents and got them. From first to last he gave Smith about £200, roughly speaking. The prices ran from 12s. to 15s. per document. Nos. 127, "permit by O. Cromwell," to 133, "commission by Charles, Prince of Wales, &c.," were the kind of documents he got from Smith.

Cross-examined by Mr Dewar—Q.—When did you first begin to suspect that there was something wrong with these documents? A.—Just before I had that sale in November 1887. Q.—What led you to suspect? A.—I never myself suspected at all, but lots of stories were floating about. Witness further stated that from Smith's story and from his call on Mr Ferrier he believed the documents to be correct. Q.—Do you now think the documents are right? A.—I give no opinion on that point, because I am not an expert. Q.—Is your opinion now the same as it was before, or have you





changed it? A.—I have read the articles in the *Dispatch*, and they have shaken my view, but I do not say that I have changed my opinion as to the authenticity of the documents. Q.—And you will not tell us what you think privately about these documents now? A.—I do not think I am called upon to say anything as to that. In reply to further questions, witness said he had never guaranteed the documents he sold to any customer, because he was never called upon to guarantee them. Q.—Did you lose on the whole transactions with Smith, or did you gain? A.—I believe I lost. Q.—You have lost? A.—Yes, in my business. Q.—But have you gained financially on the whole transactions? A.—I cannot say. Mr Ferrier led witness to believe that Smith got the documents from him. Previous to receiving the letter mentioned he had got no letter from Smith vouching for their authenticity. About a fortnight after his purchase Mr Buchanan complained about these very documents, but witness could not recollect whether the complaint was by letter or through Mr Macpherson. Witness had another customer in view, and offered to give Mr Buchanan what he had paid, less £5. At Mr Chapman's sale a Mr Toom, bookseller, Leicester Square, London, who had bought a few things from witness in the beginning of 1887, got up and made some remarks. Before the sale the confidence of witness had been shaken in the authenticity of these documents. He had read articles in the *Glasgow Herald* and *Evening Dispatch*. He showed one of the documents to Mr Brown, Princes Street, and might have offered it to him for sale. Mr William Brown, Princes Street, did not buy any of the documents. Witness did not know whether that shook his confidence or not. He offered documents to London auctioneers, but they refused them. That went to shake his confidence. He did not make any inquiry after that as to their authenticity. It was not the case that it was because he was making a profit on them that he made no inquiry. Few men would have done so much as he in going to Mr Ferrier. Some of his customers expressed doubts as to the authenticity of the documents. He did not remember in 1887 pulling a document out of his pocket and saying to Andrew Napier that he was keeping it there for the purpose of making it look a little older. If Mr Napier said that, he would not say it was false. If witness said so, he could not account for it. He was twice at Smith's lodgings. A story got abroad that Mr Ferrier had died bankrupt, and that these documents had been stolen. He called at his lodgings in Easter Road to make inquiries as to the truth of the story. Three years ago, in Brodie's restaurant, he met Mr Smith. Mr Bryce was there. He could not say whether they were together. On the day of Chapman's sale he was in the Continental Hotel. He could not say that a private room was taken in that hotel that day. He might have taken a private room and forgotten about it. He there met a young man, Munro, whom he had employed to mark the sale for him. He could not say he met Smith. He might have met him, and he might also have met Mr Bryce in the hotel. He called on Smith in Parkside Street. He did not buy all Smith's documents at once, because he would not sell them. Two customers wanted to buy them, but he himself never offered to buy them all. He thought it might have been Mr Bryce who offered to buy the whole of them. Witness thought he might have advised Smith not to sell. Smith told him the money was of more use to him if paid in little every week. If he got a lump sum it would be squandered. Six or seven documents he sent to London. He sent some to Messrs Christie, Manson, & Co., and Mr Toom. He sent some to New York, Boston, New Zealand, and, in fact, wherever he could get a market for them. Q.—Did you write a letter on 26th November 1890 to Smith stating:—"If you could bring up anything more on the Covenants or the Covenant; you spoke of a large thing you had; also the items I am specially wanting—the following, as on other side, if you have them. You might please call to-night (Friday) at, say, a quarter-past seven."

"Sanguhar Declaration and Testimony, 22d June 1680.

"Do. do., 28th May 1685.

"Hamilton Declaration, June 1679.

"Also the large parchment things you spoke of.

"Also any important man.

"Also Graham of Claverhouse.

"And any other variety. If you drop a postcard I would get it, for fear I might be out."

Asked if he wrote that letter, witness replied that he might have. Shown the letter, witness said he believed it was a letter of his. Shown another letter, dated June 1889, addressed to Smith, and reading as follows:—"Are you well enough.—A. B."—witness said it was not in his handwriting. It might have been written by his instructions. Q.—What did it mean? A.—I don't know what it meant, except, perhaps, that Smith might have been ill, and that I was asking for him.

Re-examined by Mr Strachan.—Witness had spoken to Smith sometime before the sale at Chapman's, he thought, about the suspicions that were being mooted. Smith always repudiated the idea that the documents were anything but right. Q.—What explanation do you give about that letter to Smith, desiring that he should send you certain documents that you specified? A.—Mr Smith had told me that he had a lot of things by him—that he had a charter chest full. At first he had said he had only a few, but afterwards he said he had a lot. He specified to me sometimes on his calls what documents he had, and I mentioned these to my customers, and then I wrote, in a straight business way, to Smith to know if he could bring to me these kinds of documents. Q.—Did anything you said in that letter mean that Smith should fabricate these documents? A.—Oh, no; nothing.

Francis Christian Buchanan, Clarinish House, Row, Dumbartonshire, the next witness, in reply to Mr Strachan, said, as a result of a conversation with Mr Macpherson, of the Union Bank, Edinburgh, he had inspected some documents in the possession of Mr Brown, and had bought a number for £50. That was in March 1887. No guarantee was given by Mr Brown as to the genuineness of the documents. As he was desirous of knowing the history of the documents, witness requested Mr Brown to let him have this, and, in reply, Mr Brown sent him a letter written by Smith to him.

In cross-examination, witness said he had, after the purchase, offered to give him back the documents if he returned the purchase money. Mr Brown would not agree to that. Q.—When did you discover they were bad? A.—I thought that they were bad about five minutes after I bought them. (Laughter.)

William Moir Bryce, 5 Dick Place, Edinburgh, in reply to Mr Strachan, said he was a collector of antiquities on a small scale. He knew Mr Brown, the previous witness, and from 1887 to 1889 purchased a number of documents from him, the price ranging from 10s. to 25s., which was their full market value, assuming that they were genuine. Mr Brown showed him a letter from Smith in 1887. Mr Brown gave no guarantee of the genuineness of the documents, but he expressed the belief that they were genuine.

Cross-examined by Mr Dewar.—The letter was shown to satisfy him as to the genuineness of the documents. The amount paid by witness for these documents would be about £70. Prior to May 1887, witness had not heard Smith's name mentioned. He believed in the genuineness of the deeds until October of last year, when an article appeared in the *Evening Dispatch*. In November and December 1887 he saw Smith in Brown's shop. Brown, at Smith's instigation, had asked him if he could do anything to assist Smith in getting a situation. Smith had a very plausible and insinuating manner, and spoke very nicely, and witness agreed to do so. Q.—Did you ever go to Smith's lodgings at 84 Easter Road? A.—Most certainly and absolutely I never did. Q.—Were you ever with him in Brodie's public-house?—I have been in Brodie's restaurant, and Smith may have seen me there. On one occasion he offered to purchase the whole of Smith's documents in one lot. Smith said they were in Leith, and that he had a pile about two feet in height. The sum of £500 was mentioned, and had the document come up to his expectations he might have been fool enough to give that sum. He wished to keep them for his own delectation, and was not going to sell them. He was prepared to purchase the lot if they were worth. The £500 was mere talk. Mr Smith assured him they were absolutely genuine. He wanted to purchase in order to keep them out of the market. He wished to keep anything that was worth to himself.

James Mackenzie, 2 Rillbank Crescent, in reply to Mr Reid, deposed that he was a chemist in Edinburgh and was a collector of antiquarian documents. He knew Mr Brown, and had dealt with him for twelve years.





About 1888 Mr Brown showed him two Burns MSS. in his shop. They were for sale. He made inquiries as to where they came from. Mr Brown said he had got them from the same source as others, and witness had no doubt of their genuineness. Mr Brown and he both took their authenticity for granted. He produced Smith's letter giving the history of the documents, and stating that they came from Mr Ferrier's office. Witness bought several Burns MSS. afterwards, in the belief that they were genuine, and he continued in that belief until recently. He bought many Burns MSS. from Mr Brown, paying in all about £50 for them. He sold some and bought them back again. Some time after the *Dispatch* articles appeared he made an examination of the MSS. he had, and he became satisfied, after consultation with a friend, that most of them were not genuine, and the result was that he consigned most of them to the flames. He retained six or seven documents, which he handed to the Fiscal, on one of which he wrote the word "spurious." He bought one at Chapman's sale. It bore to be a "note of the Marquis of Montrose, dated 20th May 1646."

Cross-examined by Mr Grainger Stewart, Mr MacKenzie said his primary purpose in buying the documents in question was not to resell them. As there had been some questioning about the genuineness of certain Burns MSS., he had sent several of such MSS. which were in his possession to a public sale, his principal object in doing so being to ascertain if they were genuine. He had paid as much as £10 to Mr Brown at a time for a little lot of these MSS. From first to last he had paid Mr Brown for these MSS., which he had now learned to be false, about £60. He had never asked Mr Brown for a guarantee as to the authenticity of the documents personally, for he had never, when he bought them, doubted their authenticity.

#### THE SECOND CHARGE.

George Tait, 4 Parkside Terrace, Edinburgh, manager of the Equitable Loan Company, 4 Milne Square, in reply to Mr Strachan, said he first saw Smith fully five years ago in the office of the Company. He came there with several, evidently old, MSS. Q.—Did you ask him if they were his own property? A.—He said they were his own, and that they were left him by a relative. I was satisfied with that assurance at the time, and I gave him the sum he wanted for the documents. The name he gave me was Andrew Smith, 14 Keir Street. Continuing, Mr Tait said shortly afterwards Smith called twice again with some other documents, and on the third occasion witness had had a conversation with him. He fully believed the MSS. were genuine, but he had a suspicion that Smith was a spurious man himself, and therefore witness inquired at Smith as to his legal title to them. Smith took the documents he had come with away with him, but the next day he came back with a document, which was read both by himself (Mr Tait) and by his head assistant. That document was a will bearing to be written by a Mr Ferrier. Smith showed him a special clause, which read—"I hereby bequeath to my nephew, Andrew Smith, the whole of my valuable MSS." and other effects. Witness did not remember what the other effects were, because there was a good deal of writing in the will. Smith told him that Mr Ferrier was his uncle, and that he had been in his office for some time. Smith said Mr Ferrier had died, and had left him these MSS. among other things. Smith further told him that Mr Ferrier was connected with Sir Walter Scott's family, and was also connected with some big people.

By the Lord Justice Clerk—Did this appear to be an actual will, or was it a copy? A.—I believed it to be a holograph will of Mr Ferrier, and I believed the documents were genuine too.

By Mr Strachan—He was convinced that Smith had a right to the manuscripts. The accused never told him straight out that they were genuine, but he believed they were, and upon that footing transacted business. Witness had subsequent dealings with Smith, but when he saw that none of the articles, except the first two or so, were redeemed, he made up his mind to stop doing business, and never saw Smith after that. Besides the manuscripts, Smith pledged books, but had witness not supposed that the manuscripts were genuine he would not have given so much money. The articles were sold at the Company's quarterly sale on 3d April 1890, but he could not tell the amount realised, because some of the books were destroyed.

Cross-examined by Mr Dewar—Smith took the will away with him after showing it at witness's office. He was not to know whether the names given by pawnbrokers were right or wrong. Such names as William Gladstone and Fred Archer were given him. (Laughter.) Smith redeemed some of the documents at first, but latterly he did not. He could not say that any of the documents in the indictment were pawned before Smith produced the will. He believed they got their own money out of the sale of the documents. He did not make any complaint to the Fiscal that they had been defrauded. At the sale he never guaranteed any of the documents, although he believed them to be genuine. They were sold like a pig in a poke, on their own merits. A number of books were pledged along with the manuscripts. At the sale the MSS. and books were put up in bundles of perhaps two and three each. Some brought big prices and some small. The sale book was destroyed. He had been asked by the Fiscal only some days ago what the different prices were.

The Lord Justice Clerk held this examination to be irrelevant.

Witness proceeded to say that some of the documents were in Latin or French. If the prisoner said that witness asked him to put a backing on them in the same language in order that they might take better, he was telling what was not true.

George Traquair Thin, bookseller, 54 South Bridge, Edinburgh, said the Equitable Loan Company were in the habit of sending the firm catalogues of their two annual sales in order that they might see if anything in the nature of interesting books was for sale. In the spring sale catalogue of the Company in 1890 he noticed that some interesting books and some MSS.—Burns and Scott, Rebellion and other MSS.—were for sale. On the morning of the sale he went to the saleroom and examined the documents and some interesting books—sending an assistant to the sale with instructions to give certain prices for them. Certain MSS. (which were described in the schedule of the indictment) were bought in that way by his assistant, and were delivered at witness's shop the next day. The price paid for what was purchased at the sale was about £12. When he saw the MSS. at the sale it was in a dark room, and at that time there was no talk of any forgery. From the manner in which the documents were described on their covers he took them as genuine articles. On examining them the day after the sale in his own shop, however, witness's suspicions were aroused. He then saw something was wrong, and he locked them away in a desk, and felt that he had been "had." He never made any attempt whatever to sell them, and subsequently he gave them up to the Fiscal. He was now quite satisfied that the MSS. in question were spurious.

#### THIRD CHARGE.

James Williamson, partner of the firm of James Williamson & Sons, pawnbrokers, 98 Rose Street, Edinburgh, said that in August 1889 the prisoner came to his shop with documents to pawn. These were submitted to Mr Stillie, bookseller, who said they were genuine, and witness being satisfied of their authenticity, advanced £2 on them. Accused gave the name of Andrew Smith, 18 Picardy Place. On the 8th of the same month Smith came back with three more manuscripts, and received £2 for them; and on the 10th he again called with other three documents, and got other £2 on them. Witness never saw Smith again, and the documents were not redeemed. They were sold by auction on 6th October 1890, and realised £7, 8s. altogether.

Cross-examined—He took the goods principally because Mr Stillie had said they were genuine.

Re-examined—He had no reason to doubt Smith's word at the time.

#### THE FOURTH CHARGE.

James Mullan, pawnbroker, South Bridge, answering Mr Strachan, said the accused came to his premises on 11th September 1889 and offered a manuscript (an autograph letter of Robert Burns) in pledge, stating that he had a relative a collector who valued them. Witness believed his story, and gave him 10s. on pledge. Smith came back next day, and offered in pledge two Scott manuscripts, for which he got 5s. He gave the name of Andrew Scott, Picardy Place. The manuscripts were sold at Mr Aitken's rooms, and fetched £2, 18s. Witness believed them to be genuine. They had covers on them describing their value. The Burns one was valued in that way at six guineas.

Cross-examined by Mr Grainger Stewart—Witness said there had been whisperings at the sale of the





pledges in October 1890 about the genuineness of the MSS. that had been sold in the early part of the sale, but his MSS. were last sold, and he believed them at the time to be genuine. When Smith first brought him the documents he said he might go to Mr Stillie if he wished to assure himself that they were genuine, but witness had replied that he would not bother—that he would speculate half a sovereign on what he said. Q.—You said practically that you would take the risk? A.—Quite. James Alexander Aitken, auctioneer, Lothian Street, Edinburgh, said he had conducted a sale of pawnbrokers' unredeemed pledges in October 1890—these pledges including several from Messrs Williamson and Mr Mullan. In the case of the documents handed to him by Messrs Williamson to be sold, he had been instructed to state at the sale that no guarantee was given as to their genuineness; but in the case of the MSS. from Mr Mullan no remark was made when they were consigned to him. During the course of the sale some doubts had been cast on the authenticity of the MSS., and, in point of fact, witness had guaranteed none of them.

James Lyle, 14 M'Laren Road, Edinburgh, said he was a grocer and wine merchant in Nicolson Street, and took an interest in old documents. On 6th October 1890 he purchased some documents at Mr Aitken's sale for £8 or £9. He believed them to be genuine until the articles appeared in the *Dispatch*.

Thomas Chapman, auctioneer, 11 Hanover Street, Edinburgh, replying to Mr Strachan, said that upon the death of the late John Whitefoord Mackenzie, he was instructed to sell his library, and prepared a catalogue of the books. The sale lasted from 24th March till 15th April 1886, and was known as the Whitefoord Mackenzie sale. Very few manuscripts were sold at that sale, and those sold were inserted in various editions of Burns' poems. In 1887 witness was instructed to sell some books belonging to Brown, the bookseller, in Bristo Street. After the catalogue was printed the Duke of Argyll, through his agents, claimed some of the documents, and they were given up to him. On 28th April 1888 he sold some manuscripts on the instructions of Mr Wylie Guild. Shown one of the documents in process purporting to be a holograph letter of Robert Burns, and bearing to have been bought at the Whitefoord Mackenzie sale, witness said that no such document as that was sold at the Whitefoord Mackenzie sale. Another, said to be a receipt by Burns, and bearing the Whitefoord Mackenzie bookmark, was not sold at that sale. The bookmark would be taken from other books. Another manuscript bearing to be an autograph letter of Sir Walter Scott, dated 1779, was not sold at the Whitefoord Mackenzie sale, though it bore to have been. Mr Chapman also spoke to a number of other documents which had been pledged with the Equitable Loan Company. The documents were marked as having been sold at the Whitefoord Mackenzie sale at Chapman's, and they bore also extracts from the Brown sale catalogue as representing that they were particular numbers in that catalogue. No such documents were sold at the Whitefoord Mackenzie sale. Moreover, the documents bearing these particular numbers in the Brown sale catalogue were sold to various purchasers, among others Mr Mann, Mr Bryce, and Mr Mackenzie.

Cross-examined by Mr Dewar, witness said the gross proceeds of the Brown sale had amounted to £129. Witness's commission was 10 per cent., and the other expenses of sale would amount to about 5 per cent.

James Dowell, auctioneer, Edinburgh, said he assisted his father, Mr Alexander Dowell, in his business as an auctioneer. He remembered his father being instructed, after the death of Sir James Gibson Craig, to sell a considerable number of autographs, old documents, and books of antiquarian interest belonging to the late Sir James. This sale took place in March 1887 at Dowell's Rooms. In regard to one of the documents which was pledged by Smith with the Equitable Loan Company, purporting to be a letter signed by Lord Lovat in 1744, Mr Dowell's attention was called to the fact that the document bore on its cover to have been sold at "Gibson Craig's sale, 1886." In reference to it, witness said there was no such sale in 1886. Referred next to another document pledged with the Equitable Loan Company—"A commission to the Earl of Linlithgow by Charles II."—purporting from a note on the cover to have been sold at the "Whitefoord Mackenzie sale at Dowell's," Mr Dowell said there

had been no such sale at the firm's rooms, and that the cutting appended to the cover of the document was not a cutting from any catalogue of theirs. In regard to a "Sir Walter Scott letter" pawned with the Equitable Loan Company, and marked "Gibson Craig sale," Mr Dowell said no such letter was sold at the sale in question in their rooms. As to two "James Hogg" letters, also pawned with that Company by Smith, and marked on covers "Dowell's, 1879," witness said he could find no trace of such letters having been sold at their rooms.

John Grant, bookseller, George IV. Bridge, in reply to Mr Strachan, said that he was present at the sale of Sir James Gibson Craig's library in March 1887. At that sale he purchased the autograph letter from Lord Lovat, and another autograph letter of Sir Walter Scott. These documents remained in his possession until 1890, and ultimately were sent to America. The documents in process, which were pledged with the Equitable Loan Company, and which bore to be a letter signed "Lovat," dated 11th May 1744, and autograph letter of Sir Walter Scott, could not be those which he purchased at the Gibson Craig sale. The same evidence was given regarding other documents.

John Watherston, 4 Leslie Place, Stockbridge, answering Mr Reid, said he was assistant to the last witness. He had seen the accused in Mr Grant's shop about 1888 and 1889. Prisoner's first inquiry was for manuscripts, and he purchased some of trifling value. Witness gave him copies of two catalogues of Mr Grant. He came back several times, and made similar purchases, paying not more than 10s. at a time. He led witness to believe that he was interested in these documents and in autographs. He would be in the shop about a dozen times in all, but he had not been there for two years back.

Wm. MacGillivray, W.S., Edinburgh, deposed that he was a partner of the firm of Messrs Lindsay, Howe & Co., factors for the Duke of Argyll. In consequence of what he heard, he called at Chapman's at the time of Brown's sale, and saw some documents, which from marks on the back of them, such as "Argyll," he claimed as the Duke's property. He got possession of them. A "permit by Oliver Cromwell" was one of them. He also called on Mr Brown.

Cross-examined by Mr Dewar—A telegram from the Marquis of Lorne was the first notice he had of the matter. Mr Brown, when he saw him, said he was willing to part with the documents belonging to the Duke if he were compensated; but he got no compensation.

Alexander MacLachlan, 130 Marchmont Road, Edinburgh, bookkeeper to Hope, Mann, & Kirk, said the late Mr Mann had, on the instructions of a client, attended a sale of MSS. at Chapman's in 1887, and had bought two documents—"a bond by James the Pretender," and a "letter by James Hogg."

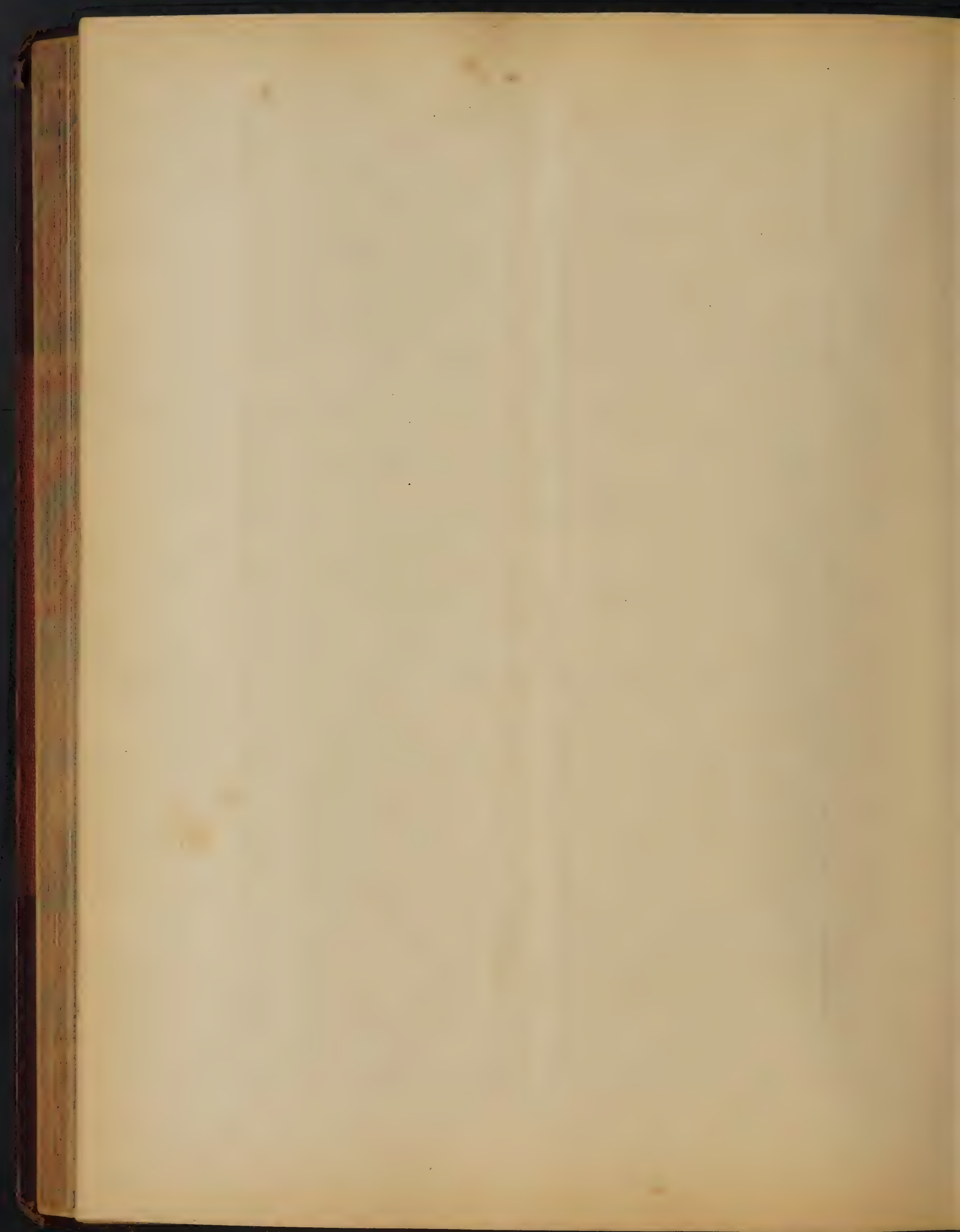
Robert Carfrae, Montrave Villa, Murrayfield, said he had bought at Chapman's at the sale of MSS. in November 1887 two documents—a letter purporting to be from Pretender James, dated 1744, and a document bearing to be a commission by the Pretender James, dated 1715.

David Johnston, 9 West Montgomery Place, Edinburgh, and assistant to Mr Stillie, bookseller, said that Mr Stillie was very old and feeble, and was unable to come as a witness. He remembered the sale of autographs at Chapman's in 1887. That sale caused a good deal of interest, and the catalogue was sent to Mr Stillie, and he attended the sale and purchased some manuscripts for a Scottish nobleman, and others on his own account. About two-thirds of the purchases went to customers, and the remainder went into Mr Stillie's stock.

Robert Milne Williamson, bookseller, 313 Leith Walk, deposed that the accused frequently purchased antiquarian and historical books from him. In April of last year Smith asked him to buy some books. A number of the volumes were those which accused had previously bought from witness, and some of them were imperfect and looked as if he had torn the plates out. The fly-leaves might have been taken away, but witness could not say positively.

Robert Fleming (junior), 34 Balfour Street, Leith, apprentice plumber, said he was with last witness up to October 1892, and was sent by him to prisoner's lodgings in Brunswick Street for a barrowful of books. They were lying on the floor, and he took them away.

Walter Shaw, 75 Fountainbridge, a law clerk, said he went to Mr Ferrier's office in 1878 or 1879. Prisoner came as a





clerk in the office afterwards. There were a number of books in the cellar, but Mr Ferrier never spoke about them. There were sederunt books and books of that kind.

Cross-examined by Mr Grainger Stewart—There were also in the cellar lots of old charters, deeds, and parchments. They were on the floor knee deep, but the cellar was not damp.

Robert Cockburn Miller, C.A., 30 York Place, Edinburgh, said in 1887 he was appointed judicial factor on Mr Ferrier's estate after his death. He found the estate to be insolvent. Sometime after his appointment, in consequence of an anonymous letter received by him in October 1887, giving information about some documents which were said to have belonged to Mr Ferrier, he went to the Procurator-Fiscal and the chief of police. Q.—Was the name of the accused connected with the matter? A.—It was, as having taken the documents from Mr Ferrier's office. Continuing, witness said he had subsequently written Smith to call on him. This Smith did, and witness then asked him if he had taken documents from Mr Ferrier's office. Smith replied that Mr Ferrier had given him liberty to take certain documents, and had told him to destroy the rest of the papers. Smith said at that time that he had neither any of the documents left nor any of the money he had received for documents. He had seen an extract of Mr Ferrier's will. There was no reference in it to Smith.

Cross-examined—He did not know who wrote the anonymous letter. He was aware that Mr Brown, Bristo, knew of the investigations that were going on in October 1887.

William Frew, detective officer, Edinburgh, said that he arrested Smith and made a search of his lodgings at 76 Brunswick Street. In the course of that search he found a book commencing—"His wit is like a diamond;" Steedman's Diary of April 1892, containing handwriting; examination paper, "No. 69, A. H. Smith;" and three loose sheets, "Zenobia, a tragedy in five acts."

James Gall Ferguson, 4 Charles Street, Edinburgh, and Curator of the Corporation Museum, spoke to the identity of some documents in that Museum, the genuineness of which had never been questioned.

David Lyell, W.S., Edinburgh, said his firm of Horne & Lyell, W.S., occupied the house of Sir Walter Scott in Castle Street, and his father bought a letter by Sir Walter Scott to Messrs Sanderson & Paterson, dated 30th January 1818. His father always regarded it as genuine, and had it framed and hung up in the office. He identified it in Court.

Baillie Gulland deposed that his father had had correspondence with Lord Macaulay about the abolition of corporate privileges, and he produced a letter from Lord Macaulay, dated 24th January 1846.

Archibald Campbell, deputy city clerk, said that, searching among the Lieutenancy papers, he found a letter from Sir Walter Scott dated January 1818, addressed to James Laing, Clerk to the Lieutenancy. This he produced as genuine.

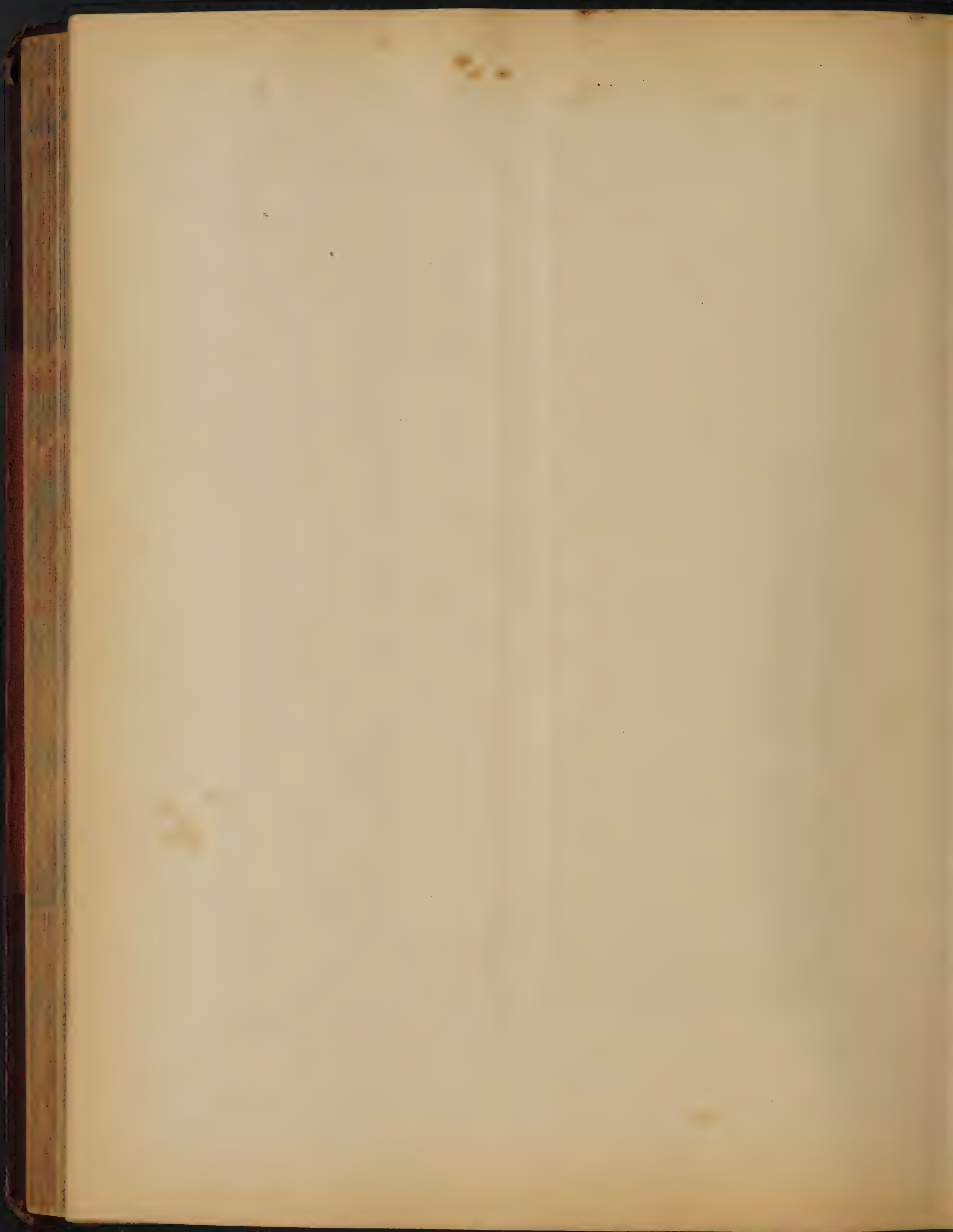
William Brown, bookseller, residing at 2 Greenhill Terrace, Edinburgh, stated that two letters signed "Lovatt" and two letters signed "Walter Scott" (shown to him) were genuine documents.

Cross-examined—He remembered Mr Brown, Bristo, coming to him about six months before the Chapman sale and offering him some MSS. for sale. On being shown the documents, witness had shaken his head over them to indicate that he did not think they were genuine MSS.

In cross-examination, witness stated it as his opinion that several documents specified in the schedule to the indictment were genuine.

George Frederick Warner, West Kensington, London, assistant keeper of MSS. in the British Museum, said, in reply to Mr Strachan, that amongst his other duties he was responsible for the purchase of manuscripts and had great experience in that line. In January of this year he was asked by the Procurator-Fiscal of Edinburgh to make an examination of a number of documents in connection with this case, and after the examination he came to the conclusion

that the whole of them were spurious. Q.—Have you formed any opinion as to their being all done by one person? A.—I think they were all done by the same hand. Altogether he had seen ninety-eight documents, and had divided them into four classes—Burns, Scott, miscellaneous letters, and historical papers. With regard to the Burns manuscripts, he examined nineteen, and classified them under two heads. Eight were short letters, and were laboured and clumsy imitations. The other class consisted, with two exceptions, of poems, and were more advanced as imitations of handwriting. The paper on which the Burns letters were written was not at all like the paper used for letters of that period. Paper like it was never used by Burns himself. It was a coarse, rough paper, and had the appearance of having been torn in some cases from books. The autograph letter dated "Mauchline, 3d May 1788" was written on paper which had been bound up before. The poems were written on two kinds of paper, one of which was a quite modern cartridge paper, the other being a bluish paper of rather a coarse make, and was the kind which would be used for legal drafts. The paper seemed to have been washed with a yellow substance to give it the appearance of age, and the soiling was not that of age, but was done of set purpose. It appeared to have been done by drawing the document across a wet dirty surface. With regard to the handwriting of all the documents, he said that Burns wrote freely and formed his letters. He made his final strokes freely and with a natural slant from left to right. In these documents that slant was much exaggerated. Coming to the signatures of the documents, he said they had all been formed on one model. The dash of Burns beneath his signature was freely drawn, but in these documents it was more or less carefully drawn. In a "receipt by Robert Burns for £8" the dash had evidently been underdrawn in pencil; while in an autograph letter of Burns dated 16th November 1793 the "B" in Burns, the "o" in Robert, and the "e" in Dumfries had evidently been touched up. There was also a contrast between the addresses in the genuine letters and those in these letters. In the latter case the same care was not exercised as in the former. Evidently there was no model to work on. The letters, too, were smaller. In all the challenged documents the tendency was to dot the "i's" too far to the right. In the "receipt" already spoken to, besides the pencil dash there were several letters which were not formed at all as Burns would have formed them. The address of a "letter of Burns," dated Mauchline, 30th April 1788, was in the same handwriting as the endorsement, and also corresponded with the writing on the cover. A peculiarity of these letters was that the subscription began with the words, "I remain." That was very unusual in Burns. He pointed out the characteristics of other letters which proved them to be spurious. The counterfeit poems of Burns differed from the forged letters mainly in this, that they showed more routine in the handwriting. One of the counterfeited poems of Burns was not a poem of his at all, but was part of Pope's writings, and others, he believed, were not poems by Burns at all. Examined next as to the "Sir Walter Scott" letters, Mr Warner said those letters were not written on letter paper, but on coarse paper which bore the appearance of having been artificially tinted. The counterfeit letters were folded in a different manner from that which prevailed at the time, and different from the manner in which Scott usually folded his letters. The letters showed a superficial resemblance to Scott's, but the writer was continually lapsing into the same handwriting as that which appeared on the wrapper. Four letters purporting to have been written in 1801, 1804, 1818, and 1820 were all written on paper of the same size and water mark, and were all addressed to the same individual. In the opinion of witness these letters were all written at the same time. Out of fourteen letters of this series no fewer than six began—"I have your letter," and eight ended—"I remain." Scott did not use these expressions to such an extent.



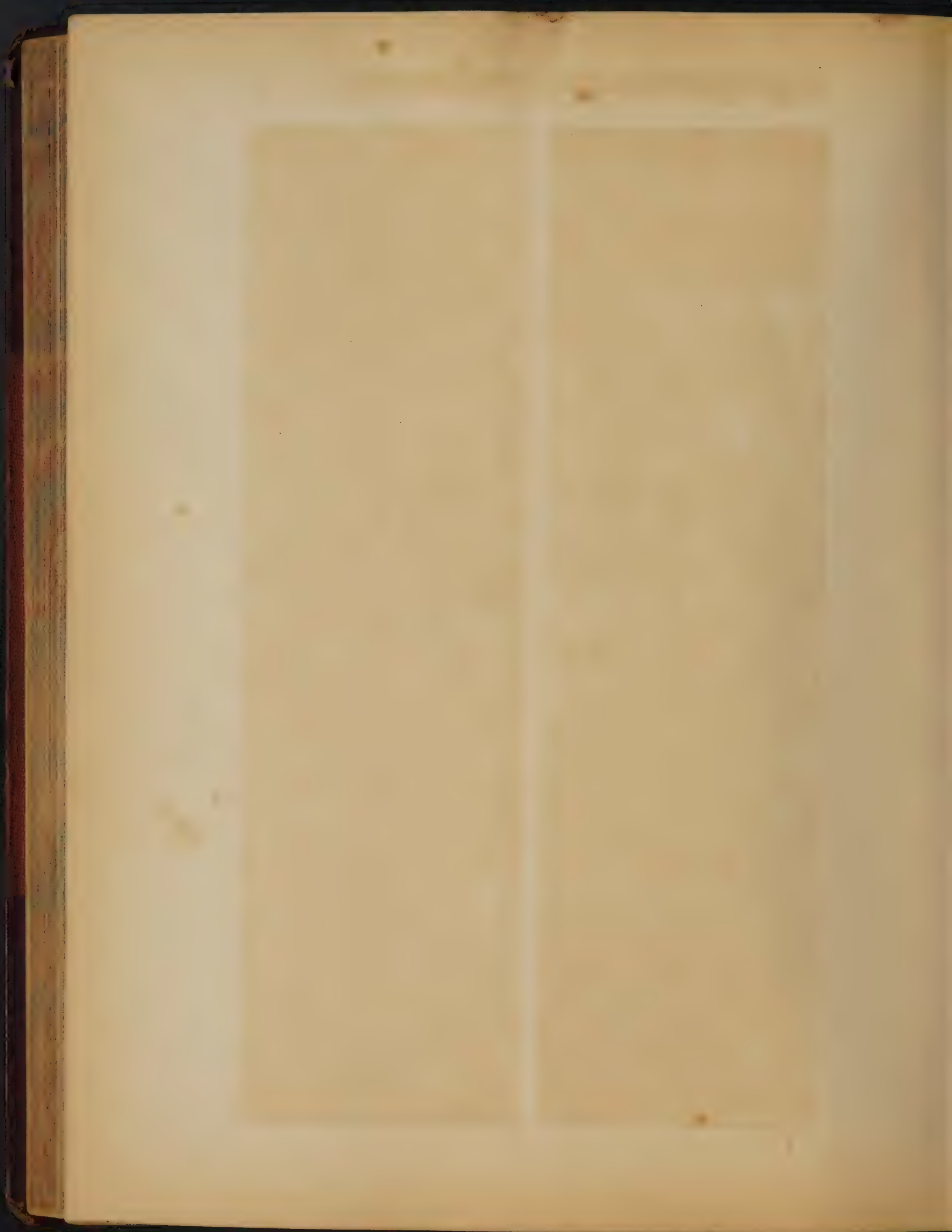


## Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.

EDINBURGH, MONDAY, June 26, 1893.

THE trial of "Antique" Smith for passing off forged MSS. as genuine began this morning in the High Court of Justiciary.

At the outset objections to the relevancy of the indictment were raised on behalf of Smith, but were repelled, and evidence was called.

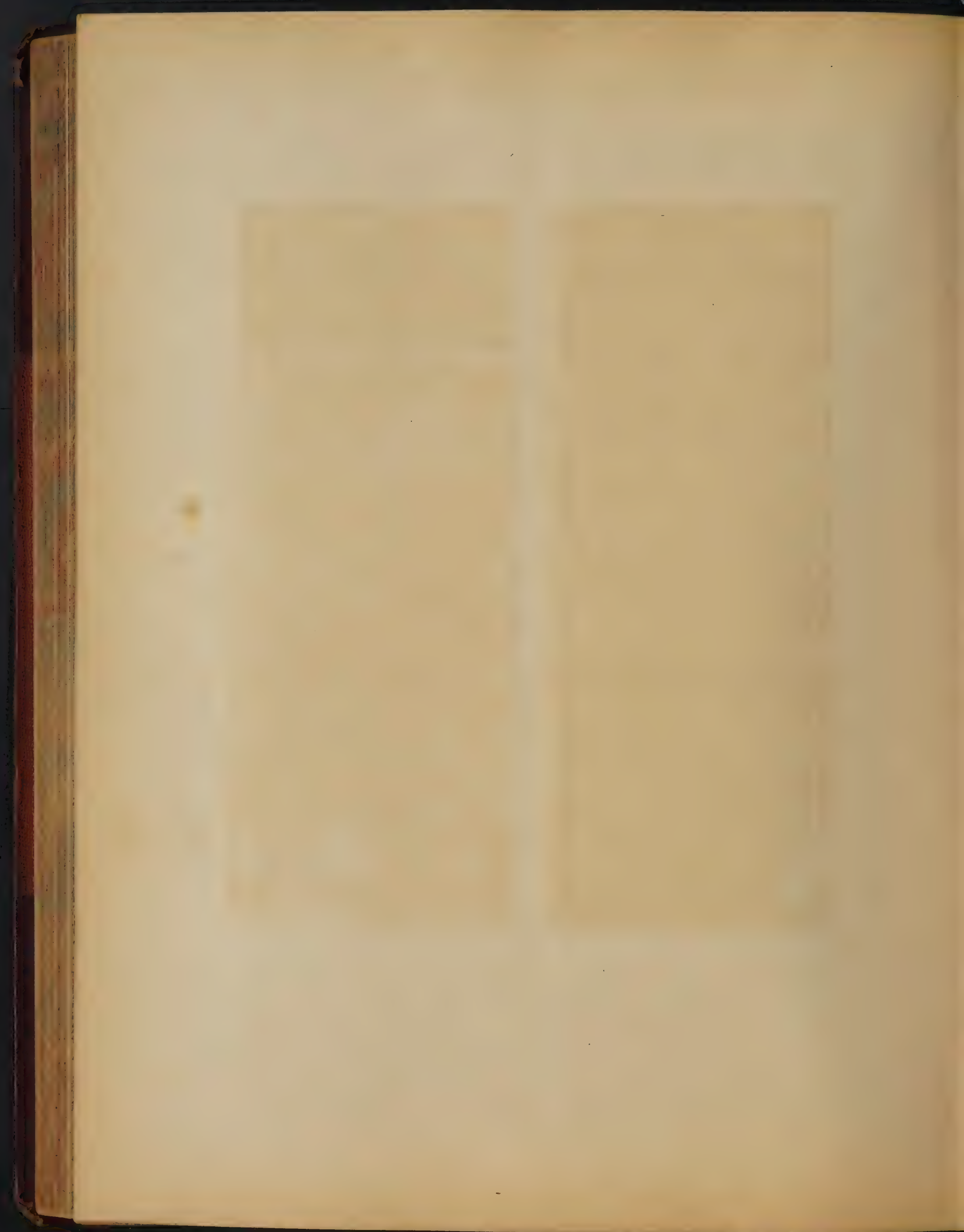




WITH the conviction and sentence of "Antique" Smith ends the last act of one of the most remarkable cases of manuscript forgeries on record. Some there have been, like Ireland's, full of more romantic incidents, but none can compare with "Antique's" for the duration and extent of the imposture, for the cleverness of the countless imitations with which the cunning rogue deceived Prime Ministers and accomplished peers, and even some skilled collectors, besides hosts of smaller fry over whom he had cast his net. Expert testimony was given at the trial, as similar testimony had been previously published in these columns, to the effect that the forgeries were in some respects clumsy, and on close inspection and comparison were easily detected. This is true, and yet it needs qualification; for though in the immense mass of manuscripts unloaded upon the public by the Bristo, George Street, and other emporiums there were great inequality, carelessness, and blundering in dates and probabilities, it is impossible to deny that, viewed as a whole, marvellous imitative calligraphic skill, rare patience and ingenuity, and even proofs of considerable literary knowledge and research, were abundantly displayed. Indeed, the more one knows of the circumstances of the case, and the relationship between the forger and the parasites who sucked his brains and prospered in his crime, the more one is driven to admire the rogue's skill and audacity, and to despise the mean mercenariness or the egregious vanity of the others. What stories of cocks and bulls have they not told—of secret drawers, and rare finds, and a deal more of skimble scamble stuff—to bolster up their pretentious claims to be regarded as of the Burns cult! "Lord, Lord, how this world is given to lying!" exclaimed Falstaff; and human nature may still be found as weak and base as in his time. The conviction of Smith was, of course, inevitable. The facts were too clear, and the counsel for the defence did all that they could with a hopeless case. The jury with merciful consideration pleaded for the prisoner on account of the temptation and encouragement extended to him, and with this recommendation there will, we think, be widespread sympathy, and, indeed, had it been possible, we fain would have seen the period of punishment meted out in shares proportioned to responsibility, and bestowed upon a larger number. For without what the jury calls the "easy facility" offered to "Antique" for disposing of his wares, the daring fraud would have been impossible. His was the initiative, no doubt, but without encouragement his design must have perished at the outset. Of Smith it may be said "company, villainous company, hath been the spoil of him." Natural ability was perverted and misapplied; he discovered in the manufacture of manuscripts an easy mode of satisfying his loafing Bohemian existence; his inexhaustible stores of literary and

autograph "treasures," from Cromwell down to Thackeray, were accepted with almost unquestioned faith by pretended experts, until the market was flooded, and Mr Craibe Angus set to work to hunt the impudent impostors down. We need not retail the story of his efforts extending over several years, but we may refer to one or two features of the business which were necessarily ignored in a criminal trial, from which everything was eliminated save what was absolutely necessary to prove the various charges.

Several witnesses spoke to their knowledge of the immense store of documents and relics possessed by Smith, and they alleged that they reposed implicit faith in his ridiculous tale about having discovered them knee-deep in the cellar of a bankrupt W.S. Let anyone mark the significance of this story. It is a common thing in the event of three or four Burns treasures being exposed for sale, say, in London—they do not come in large bundles—for Scottish collectors to go up in person with the object of trying to secure some of them; these and other relics are the subjects of much interest and discussion among many collectors and dealers, and high prices are obtained. Anything approaching the fabulous wealth of material belonging to Smith would have created a sensation, even if confined to his Burns manuscripts alone; but he was a sort of universal provider, being able to supply whatever a Bristo, or George Street, or other patron was desirous of obtaining, and to supply them, too, for the price of an old ~~ring~~. Not only so, but it was long notorious to his patrons that the genuineness of these prodigious finds was not only questioned, but questioned in many high quarters. Yet they knew, or professed to know, better. They continued to buy reams of spoilt paper in the cheapest market and to sell it in the dearest, as mementoes of the honoured dead; Smith must have appeared to their innocent eyes to possess some genie's ring by which he could produce at will sonnets and songs, and Jacobite relics by the score, on receipt of order, and according to invoice price. Were these men really unsuspecting of the character of Smith and his mysterious hoard? Did they really believe that the cellars of Edinburgh lawyers were paved with priceless literary and antiquarian relics? Did they not think it strange of Smith to assert at one time that he had "very few" documents, and then that his supply seemed inexhaustible? Did the questioning of experts not shake their faith? Did they never suspect that the miserable pittance which they were paying for all this trash were enough to stamp it as spurious? Did they not know that if any such genuine find really existed it would be enough to astonish the whole literary world?—were, in short, these worthies knaves or were they fools? It is not for us to decide this question, which may be submitted to the jury of public opinion, for the persons who





acted as go-betweens in this matter must face the alternative of either roguery or folly. Smith's counsel attempted to associate some of them directly with himself, but of this there was no proof offered, and it is only reasonable in the circumstances to assume that they are simply fools; but even on this assumption they are fools who have committed a great wrong, and a wrong all the greater that it has been committed against the memories of men whose remaining relics, lovingly cherished by their countrymen, they have helped to discredit. Nor can it be said of any one of them that they have displayed one redeeming quality that would atone for the mischief they have wrought. Nothing have they done to clear up the case; memory became a blank just at the very time it should not, and matters of much interest are thus left in deep obscurity. They have pictured themselves as innocent dupes who were taken in and done for by a clever scamp. It may be so, for it is a strange world, and the density and depth of ignorance and folly of some folk is immeasurable. But let them thank their lucky stars and lay to heart the words of King Lear—

See how yon justice rails upon yon simple thief.  
Hark in thine ear; change places; and, handy dandy,  
which is the justice, which is the thief?

ACKNOWLEDGMENT should be made of the admirable manner in which the case for the Crown in the matter of the MSS. frauds was prepared. Edinburgh justice, as we think, is sometimes tardy in bestirring itself; but when it does strike it strikes with effect. The case was one which entailed immense labour; yet everything was done that was necessary, and there was nothing too much. Of course, only the fringe of the case was touched; the romance of the story was in the main excluded as being outside the requirements of a criminal prosecution. While this acknowledgment is due to the Crown authorities, it may be said that some well-known Edinburgh experts have acted a very shabby part in this matter. These gentlemen, who are regarded as distinguished authorities, declined to

take any part in giving testimony in the case, and thus necessitated the bringing of expert evidence all the way from the British Museum. It might naturally be supposed that where a question of the genuineness of immense quantities of Burns, and Scott, and Hogg, and other MSS. and Jacobite relics was concerned, every patriotic Scotsman would have done his best in the interests of truth and justice; yet it was not so, and the pity of it is that these experts are themselves Government officials. Fortunately London experts are available, and it should be said that in this matter these London experts without exception have displayed remarkable acumen and rendered excellent service. The British Museum especially has upheld its traditions as the centre of authority on questions of this character. It should not, however, be allowed to go forth to the public that the MSS. frauds have really compromised the bookselling trade of Edinburgh. At most, only two or three members were intimately concerned in it, and although several firms at one time or other became possessed of a few of the bogus manuscripts, they detected the imposture, and laid them aside. From all these firms, indeed, every assistance was received by the persons who were engaged in tracing the frauds. One service rendered by the present successful prosecution has been to make the law on the subject perfectly clear. If any doubt existed as to the power of Justice to clutch fabricators and utterers of documents and relics, it was most effectively dispelled by the lucid and logical summing up of the Lord Justice-Clerk, which will become a valuable "precedent" in such cases. But though "Antique" Smith has been scotched, his nefarious products still exist in extraordinary numbers. What, it may be asked, is to be done to separate the genuine Burns and Scott and other documents from the mass of "Antique Smiths"? Or are no precautions at all to be taken to prevent the simple and unwary from being imposed upon in future? The question is one of great difficulty certainly, but at least it deserves the serious consideration of the Society of Archivists.





## CONVICTION OF ANTIQUE SMITH.

SENTENCE—12 MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT.

THE Lord Justice-Clerk and a jury, in the High Court of Justiciary yesterday, concluded the trial of Alexander Howland Smith on an indictment charging him with fabricating and disposing of historical and literary MSS. After counsel had addressed the jury, the Lord Justice-Clerk summed up. He said the case had been ably presented by counsel on both sides, although the exigencies of his situation had led counsel for the accused to take a line in some parts of his speech for the defence which his Lordship feared would not commend itself to the jury as being beneficial to his client. The case was certainly somewhat novel. In the present instance they had a charge against the accused of getting up spurious documents, old and interesting, for the sole purpose of getting money. He would at the outset brush aside a good deal said by the defending counsel on the question of law. If a man, for the purpose of getting money to himself, concocted and made up spurious documents which, if genuine, would have had a historical or literary interest, for the purpose of selling them for money, and did so sell the documents to people who took them, on the representation of the man, as being what they professed to be, that was undoubtedly a crime by the law of Scotland. It was just a piece of cheating or swindling, as it would be cheating or swindling to pass false goods of any kind. If the documents in question were spurious and were known to the prisoner to be spurious—if they were got up by him intentionally to represent historical or interesting documents for the purpose of sale—and if he did so sell them as the documents they were represented to be, that was a crime. The first question for the jury to consider was whether the documents were spurious, and the remarks of counsel for the defence on that aspect of the case were somewhat striking, because, while Mr Dewar's first contention was that Mr Andrew Brown knew that the documents received by him from accused were not genuine, his last contention was that the documents were not spurious at all. If Mr Dewar's case was that the documents were not spurious, then he (the Lord Justice-Clerk) did not understand the first part of his defence at all. In regard to the sufficiency of the evidence as to the spurious nature of the documents, his Lordship pointed out that if the evidence in the case amounted to anything more than mere comparison of handwriting, it might have been difficult to say that the case was proved. He did not lay it down that such evidence might not be sufficient in certain cases, but it was quite sound to say that this kind of evidence was evidence that ought to be scrutinised with the greatest possible care, and that if the case had rested on the evidence of mere similarity of handwriting, he would have laid it down that that evidence should be very carefully considered. But the evidence of mere similarity of handwriting was not the whole evidence as to authenticity in this case; it was only part of the case. The evidence went a great deal further than mere evidence of similarity of handwriting. His Lordship pointed out, in particular, the evidence as to the character of the paper, how it had been torn from old books and artificially tinted, and how the writing in some cases had been painted over. No doubt they got most of it from two witnesses who were skilled in handwriting, but they were facts, simple facts, and clear facts. It was, he said, for the jury to consider whether any doubt was left upon their minds that these documents were spurious documents expressly made up for the purpose of making gain. If the prisoner went to any one, and, on the representation that he had got these documents in some place where he had never got them, if he received payment for these documents, he was in law guilty of a fraud—guilty of the fraud with which he was here charged. That would be the case even if he was not the fabricator of the documents; but it was for the jury to say whether they had any doubt that Smith was the fabricator of the documents—if they were fabricated—in view of the fact that the characteristics of his handwriting were found in the documents throughout, and in the very wrappers. The prisoner's case seemed to be that he got these documents in a room below Mr Ferrier's office. It was for the jury to consider whether there was even a plausible case of that kind made out. That brought his Lordship to speak of the four specific charges contained in the indictment. The case of Brown was the only one which had any peculiar

features. Some very strong comments had been made upon Mr Brown by the counsel for the prisoner, and it was for them to consider what weight they attached to these comments. They must keep in view that if it was the case of the prisoner now that Brown knew that these documents were spurious, then the prisoner himself must have known that they were spurious too. Looking at the beginning of the transactions between Brown and the prisoner, could there be any doubt that Brown was buying documents upon the representations of the prisoner—having his own doubts as to their genuineness—but believing the story that the documents had been got by the prisoner in Mr Ferrier's repositories. If Brown bought from the prisoner on the footing that the documents found in this collection, and if the prisoner in selling to him knew that that was not the fact, he would be guilty under the first charge. Of course, even if in the course of the proceedings Brown came to know that they were spurious, and if he entered into an arrangement with the prisoner, tacit or otherwise, that they were to make a trade in false documents, that would alter the case so much as to the later documents, because in regard to them Brown would not be deceived; and he thought they were quite entitled to draw a distinction between the documents obtained first and those obtained later if they thought this arrangement was proved. But though they were entitled to hold, if they considered it proved, that Brown was a party to the fraud, his Lordship had to point out that that would be a very strong thing to hold. They had to remember that Brown was not on his trial, and that he had no opportunity of bringing forward witnesses to repel the charges made against him in cross-examination. He was in Court as a witness and they must judge of him with regard to his credibility by what they had seen of him. But it was something more than judging of his credibility if they found that he had been a party to a criminal scheme. If they were satisfied that Brown knew that the documents were concocted all through, then the first charge would not stand, because there would be no deception of Brown at all. Taking up next the second charge (that of pledging spurious documents with the Equitable Loan Company), his Lordship said if the jury were satisfied that Mr Tait gave money to the prisoner upon the representation contained in what must have been a fictitious will, then the prisoner was guilty of fraud in tendering the documents as genuine, and as having been received by him under a will of Mr Ferrier, and in receiving money for them. As to the third charge (that of pledging spurious documents with Messrs Williamson & Sons), the representation made in that instance was that the documents were bought at auction sales. If the jury was satisfied that that was a false representation, and that the documents were documents made by the accused himself, they were entitled to convict the prisoner on that charge. In reference, again, to the last charge (that of pledging spurious documents with Mr Mullen), the evidence was to the effect that accused had represented that he obtained the documents through a deceased relative. If the jury were satisfied that that was a false representation, and that the documents were handed over and money received on that representation, that would be sufficient to convict the prisoner on the last charge. Dealing next with a point raised for the defence, his Lordship said prisoner's counsel had maintained that if the persons who had received the documents in question, and paid money for them, succeeded in selling them for as much or for more than the accused had got for them, then the prisoner could not be convicted of fraud. His Lordship felt bound to tell the jury that that was not the law. If the accused by false and fraudulent representations induced certain persons to give him money for documents which he knew to be fabricated documents, then the crime with which he was charged was completed, and nothing that happened afterwards could have any effect upon the question the jury had to decide—whether he was guilty or not of the charges. The trial, his Lordship continued, was, of course, a serious one for the prisoner; but it was also serious for society. The fraud charged was uncommon, and the persons it might injure were generally the particular class who wished to collect old and interesting documents. But unquestionably the fraud, if fraud there was committed, was in itself a serious one. It was only uncommon in the sense that





Verdict

it was extremely rare for persons, having sufficient skill in deception as almost to make a livelihood by it, to devote themselves to fraud, and also for this reason, that if one was to make a livelihood by deception, he must keep at it. In these aspects it was a serious crime, but it was also an uncommon crime; and as the purpose of the law was to deter persons from committing "like crimes in all time coming," there might be a distinction drawn in respect of punishment between a common and an uncommon crime. He said that with the view of suggesting to the jury that if they felt bound to convict, and if, in the exercise of their common-sense as citizens, they saw that the case was one in which they could make any recommendation as regarded punishment, such recommendation might be made to him. If they were to convict the prisoner, he thought it ought to be marked that the crime was a serious one. It was a serious crime; therefore, if there was to be a conviction and punishment, and if the jury saw fit, in the exercise of their judgment to give him any aid in mitigating the punishment, a recommendation to that effect should be made to him.

The jury, after an absence of forty minutes, during which the Court became very crowded, returned, and announced their verdict as follows:—My Lord, the jury unanimously find the panel guilty of all the charges, and by a majority recommend the prisoner to mercy, on the ground that this is an unusual crime, and because of the easy facility of disposing of the spurious documents afforded him.

Mr DEWAR asked the Lord Justice-Clerk to bear in mind that the charge had been hanging over the prisoner's head since January.

The LORD JUSTICE-CLERK, in pronouncing sentence, said—Alexander Howland Smith, the crime of which you have been convicted is a serious one, particularly in the view that you evidently were following the course of concocting documents in order practically to make a livelihood by selling them. I am giving all the effect I can to the recommendation of the jury in abstaining from pronouncing a sentence of penal servitude, and sentencing you to imprisonment for twelve calendar months.

The prisoner was then removed.





Alexander Smith has been convicted at Edinburgh of fabricating historical and literary documents, and he appears to have carried on this trade for several years on a very large scale. From the evidence of the experts who had examined the documents which Smith sold, one would be justified in concluding that such collectors and their agents are congenital idiots; for they do not appear to have ever taken the slightest pains to verify the alleged relics of Burns, Scott, Oliver Cromwell, Charles Edward Stuart, and other literary and political celebrities, for which they were ready to pay large sums. The paper on which the Burns poems and letters were written did not in the least resemble that which was invariably used towards the close of the last century. The poems, indeed, were written on modern cartridge-paper. As to Scott's letters, a collection purporting to have been written in 1801, 1804, 1818, and 1820 were all indited on paper of the same size and watermark. The Jacobite documents were described as being palpable forgeries, defective not only in the handwriting and signatures, but also in the materials and in the contents, while the dates were outrageously wrong. All these fabrications, however, had deceived the intelligent collectors of such relics, who seem to have accepted anything which Smith brought to them without a glimmer of suspicion. Collectors were so gullible, indeed, that they went to Smith and told him precisely the sort of relics which they desired to purchase, and when they presently returned to find out whether he could comply with their wishes, lo and behold! the letter, or poem, or document which had been indicated was sure to be forthcoming. 67193.

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#### THE EDINBURGH MSS. FRAUDS.

The *Scotsman* says:—"One moral of the case is that collectors of ancient MSS. and of the autographs of famous men ought to be peculiarly careful about knowing what they buy. An idle curiosity rather than any real taste for or interest in historical and literary research is too often the guiding motive of the quest. A blind passion for collecting—be it birds' eggs, or postage stamps, or Burns letters—out-runs prudence and knowledge, which, in the matter of identifying genuine manuscripts seems to be not too common even among dealers, and to be confined to a few experts in handwriting. The mischief, so far as it merely concerns the MSS. collector pure and simple, may not be great; it matters, perhaps, little to himself or anybody else whether his documents are genuine or clumsy forgeries. But the combination of credulity and ignorance, with a desire for what is rare or ancient, breeds 'Antique Smiths;' it is the old story of those who have a little brains and knowledge but no money preying on those who are better endowed with money than with knowledge or brains. A twelvemonth in jail may give Smith an opportunity of learning to put his brains to better and more honest use."

The *Dundee Advertiser* says:—"A clumsy and ill-informed manufacturer of historical documents like the man described as 'Antique' Smith who was convicted at Edinburgh yesterday, will not take in any one who knows what historical documents are. It is the ignorant amateur collectors, who have little claim to be protected from the consequences of their ignorance, who make business for clumsy fabricators. They buy manuscripts and documents to sell them again at a higher price, but they are as ignorant of the merchandise they are trading in as a town-bred man is of pedigree cattle."

The *North British Mail* says:—"The case is a remarkable one, not so much, perhaps, because literary forgeries are of rare occurrence as because of the length of time it has taken to hunt down this particular forger. Six or seven years ago the public were warned against the manufacture of such spurious documents. Smith's productions were such as to attract more or less suspicion almost from the first, for we find one of the purchasers, who gave £50 for a lot of the documents in March 1887, stating in the witness-box that he thought they were bad about five minutes after he had bought them. . . . Those who were duped deserved to be. They ought to have been on their guard against deception, in view of the caution suggested by the questions raised as to the documents, and people who are taken in after such warning can hardly claim much sympathy."

The *Daily News*, commenting on the trial of "Antique" Smith, says:—"The range of this literary forger's ambition was much too wide and his qualifications were far too limited. The wonder is that the Edinburgh folks, with their reputation for learning, were so easily deceived. But they were not deceived long, and they themselves were the first to find out the fraud."



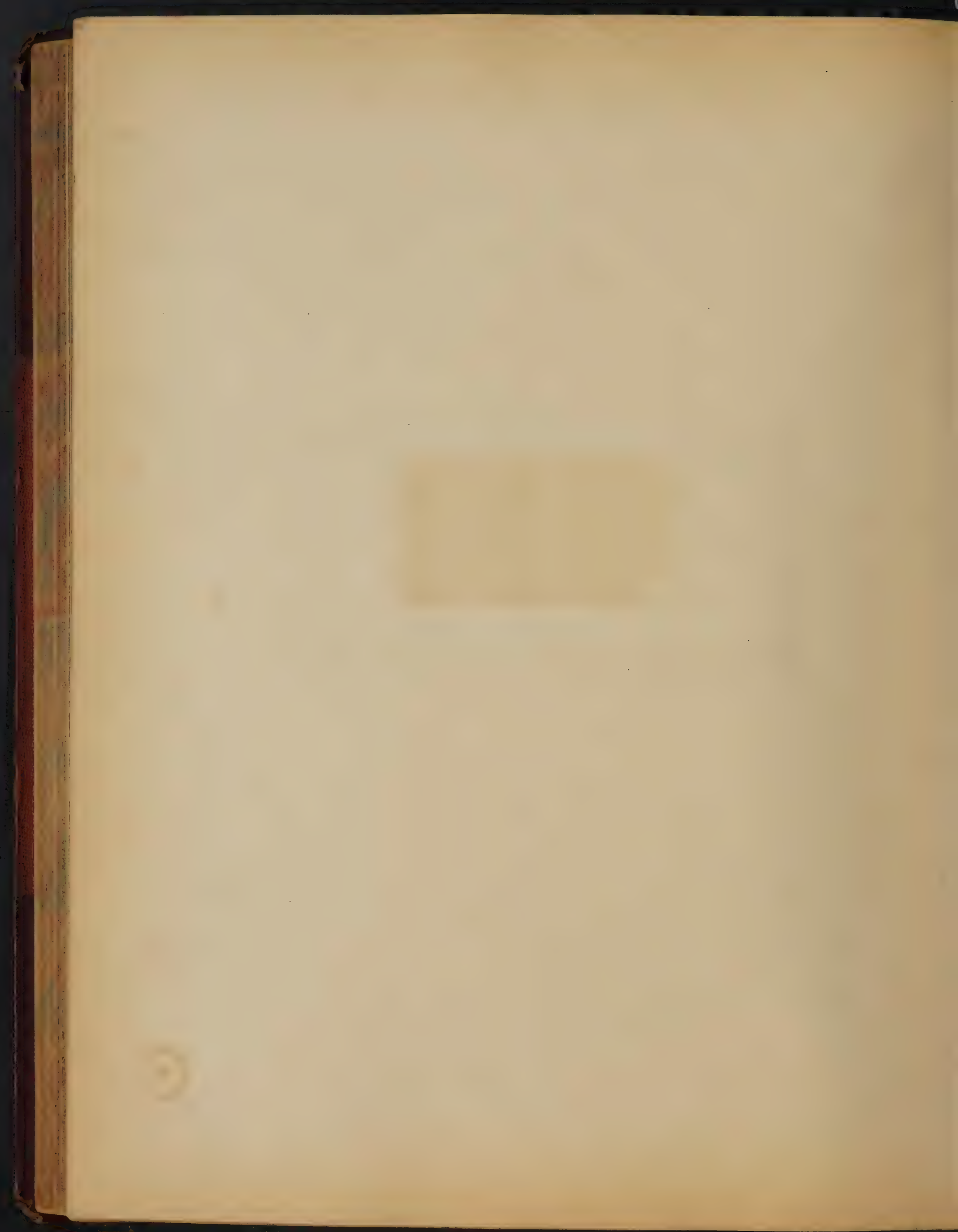


*Mr Brown thinks that it is perhaps due to those who have from time to time purchased MSS. from him, that he should take the opportunity afforded by the offer of the above to state that the spurious documents which have been so widely circulated, and which have apparently originated in Edinburgh, have been from the first persistently rejected by him.*

*Those which he has seen have been, to his mind, not only forgeries, but almost without exception very palpable ones, and therefore dismissed by him at a glance, as they also were, he believes, by the respectable London dealers and by the British Museum Experts.*

*As most of Mr Brown's clients know, he has had many years' experience of Autograph MSS. of the best class (not least of those of Burns and Scott), and he need hardly say that, where such are offered for sale by him, he can give the most confident guarantee of authenticity.*

*He would not have felt it necessary to make this statement had it not been that Edinburgh has gained such an undesirable notoriety in this matter.*





**Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.**

**EDINBURGH, MONDAY, August 7, 1893.**

**SUMMARY OF TO-DAY'S NEWS**

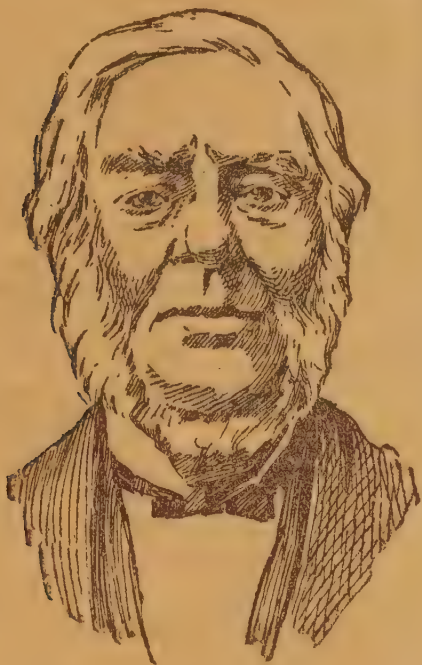
We regret to announce the death of Mr James Stillie, the well-known Scottish book-collector.





# DEATH OF MR STILLIE.

WE regret to announce the death of Mr James Stillie, the famous book-collector and bibliographer, which occurred about 11 o'clock to-day. Mr Stillie had been for a long time ailing. He took to bed on Thursday night, and sank gradually until he passed away this forenoon.



With Mr Stillie's death has been severed the sole remaining link that connects the old world to the Waverley Novels with the world of to-day. He was a schoolboy when Scott published his first poem, and he was thinking seriously of a career when "Waverley" appeared. He was also intimate with Gilbert Burns. We reproduce below the substance of an appreciative article which appeared about a year ago in the *Publishers' Circular*.

Mr Stillie was the younger son of a small farmer in Ayrshire, who comparatively late in life migrated to Edinburgh to start business as a seedsman, and was killed in an accident shortly afterwards. He must have taken some interest in literature, for his eldest son, George, was apprenticed to John Ballantyne & Co. in 1809, and James in 1816. Five years later, the latter was "turned over" to James Ballantyne & Co., Scott, as is well known, being one of the partners of both firms. During those early years Mr Stillie saw much of the then "Great Unknown." To him was entrusted the delicate duty of taking proofs to Abbotsford, and Scott, with his great genial nature, had always a word of good cheer for the land. On one occasion they both happened to wander into the kitchen where was carved on the chimney-piece "Waste not want not." Young Stillie ventured to inquire the reason for having it there. "My man," replied Scott, clapping him on the shoulder, "you're to eat your bellyful, but throw nothing away." Of another memorable visit to Abbotsford Mr Stillie told the following anecdote:—

"At the opening of the great room at Abbotsford, in October 1818, there was a grand display at dinner; the troop of Yeoman Cavalry was present in full uniform, young Walter being one of their officers. Sir Walter was in the chair, and young Walter and John Ballantyne were cronpiers. I had the honour of a seat next young Walter. It was a jovial night. Sir Walter's two pipers played during dinner, but unfortunately they imbibed too much of the Mountain Dew, and, having some angry words with the cottars, they drew their dirks, and the stampede was extraordinary. Having

to sleep in one of the cottar's houses, at ten o'clock I got as far as the stables, when the fear of a dirk suggested the hayloft, and, drawing up the ladder, I slept under the hay. Next day a court was held upon the pipers, but, being favourites with the cottars and no harm done, it ended in a good-natured remonstrance by Sir Walter against using their dirks.

Great secrecy, as is known, was preserved about the authorship of the Waverley Novels. The manuscripts were all copied after leaving Scott's hands, and it fell to George Stillie to copy "Rob Roy." In connection with this last book Mr Stillie used to relate that when a copy was sent to Miss Edgeworth with the notes, she returned it to Scott, and wrote she would read no novels with notes. At a meeting in Mr Stillie's shop with Dr Jameson, of dictionary fame, Sir Walter said she was quite right, for Rob Roy in the novel is a hero, but in the notes a thief.

Mr Stillie rose to be "bill man" with the Ballantynes, in which office he continued until 1825, when he began business for himself. It was in 1826 that the "big smash" came, and Scott woke one morning, not to find himself famous, but to find himself a bankrupt with personal liabilities of something like £150,000.

As has been stated, Mr Stillie started for himself in 1825, when he bought the business of Mr John Robertson in High Street. He had been in harness for the almost unparalleled period of sixty-seven years, and it was only lately he gave up attending his shop in George Street. Archibald Constable was his first customer, and Mr Stillie was firm in the opinion that that there never existed a more genial business man "Archie Constable." If Mr Stillie would be inclined to make any exception it would be in favour of Scott. To him Scott is not only the greatest, but the best of men. "You had only to know him to love him," said Mr Stillie. "Some great men are proud, but Scott was not like them; he had a kind word for everybody. He did not know what pride was. He spoke to me as if I was his equal. And he was a true man. He was quite incapable of telling a lie. He could not have done it; he said laughingly to Johnny Ballantyne that 'truth was a great drawback to genius,' but that was one of his jests. No man loved a joke better. He was a great man, a great man," said Mr Stillie musingly; "there'll never be his like again." Scott, it may be mentioned, frequently looked into the shop in High Street to pick up rare volumes and chat to Dr Jameson. He did not forget to call on Mr Stillie before the last tragic journey to Italy.

Shortly after Scott's death, Mr Stillie removed to Princes Street, then to Hanover Street, and finally to his well-known premises in George Street. His business was entirely confined to old books and manuscripts, and in the course of his career he had handled large numbers of both.

Among Mr Stillie's customers were many men of note. The most interesting of them was Mr Gladstone. The ex-Prmier rarely came to Edinburgh without looking into Mr Stillie's shop. He was, according to Mr Stillie, a shrewd buyer, and insisted on having his discount. On one occasion he bought some valuable volumes from Mr Stillie, and returning some years afterwards, said, 'By the way, you charged me too much for one of the books I bought last time I was here.' Mr Stillie replied he would allow 10s. above if returned. 'In one of his last visits,' wrote Mr Stillie, 'he began to think he was buying too many of my scarce books, and, to the great amusement of Ford Rosebery, who was with him, he exclaimed, 'Had I must leave this shop or I shall be ruined.'

Mr Stillie was in his nintieth year of his age. He was the oldest bookseller in the city, having commenced business in 1826 as an apprentice with John Ballantine in Hanover Street. With his brother George as partner he succeeded Messrs Robertson & Co. in the High Street in or about the year 1833. Deceased was a native of Ayrshire, and took an interest in and was a member of the Ayrshire Club which provided bursaries for deserving children in the county. In politics he was a Conservative, and was a member of the Established Church of Scotland.

